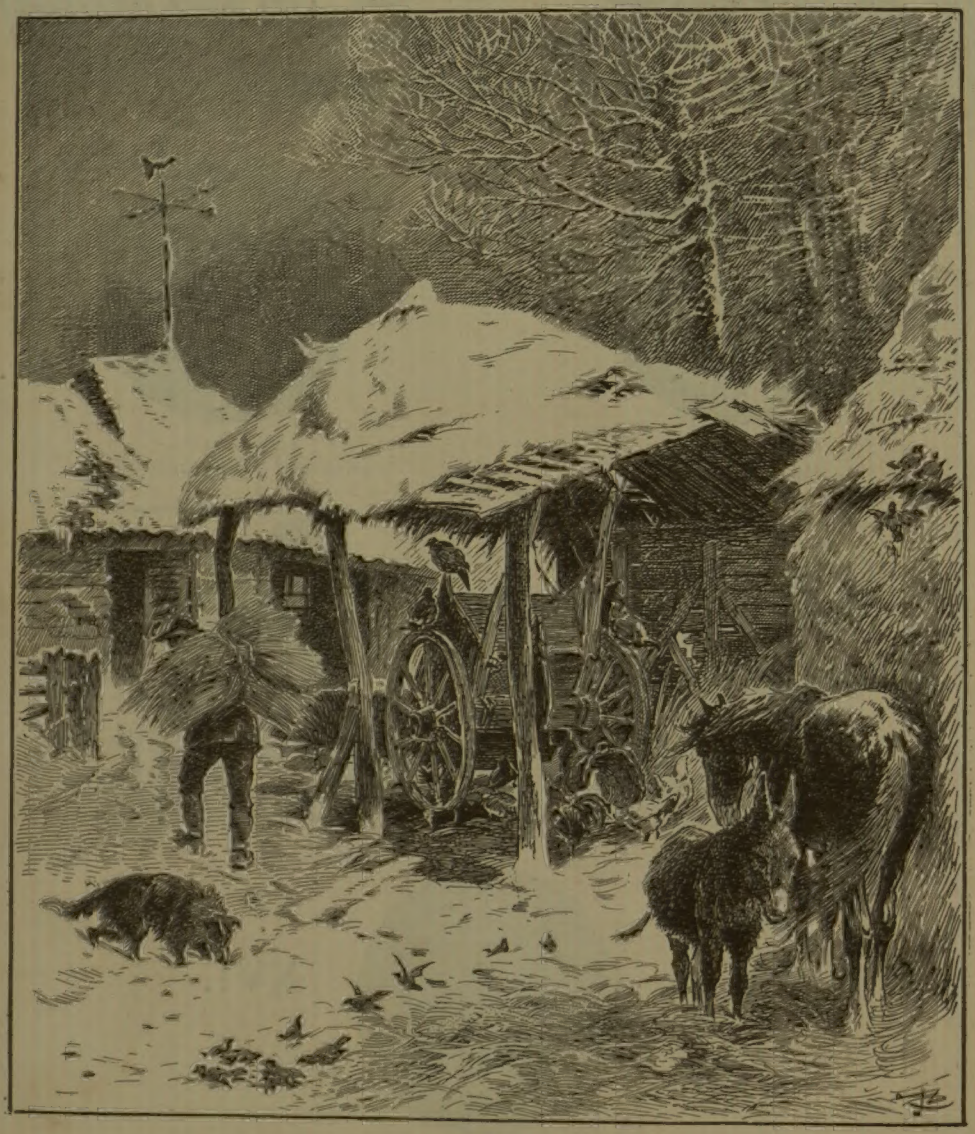

WINTER.

Drawn for THE CAPTAIN by Chas. Tressider

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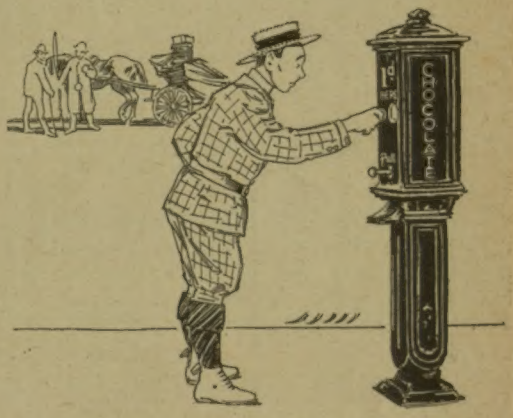
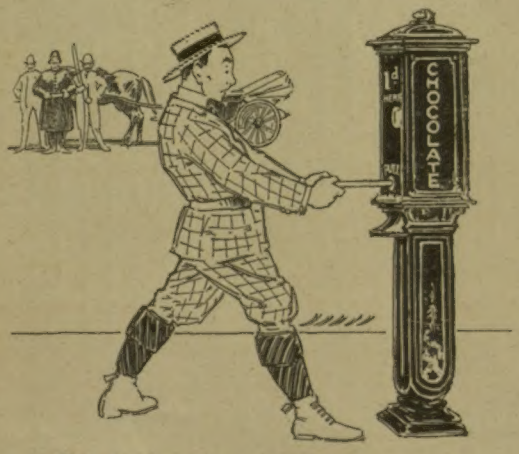
A SUGGESTION.

1. Muscle culture and weight-lifting are now the correct thing.



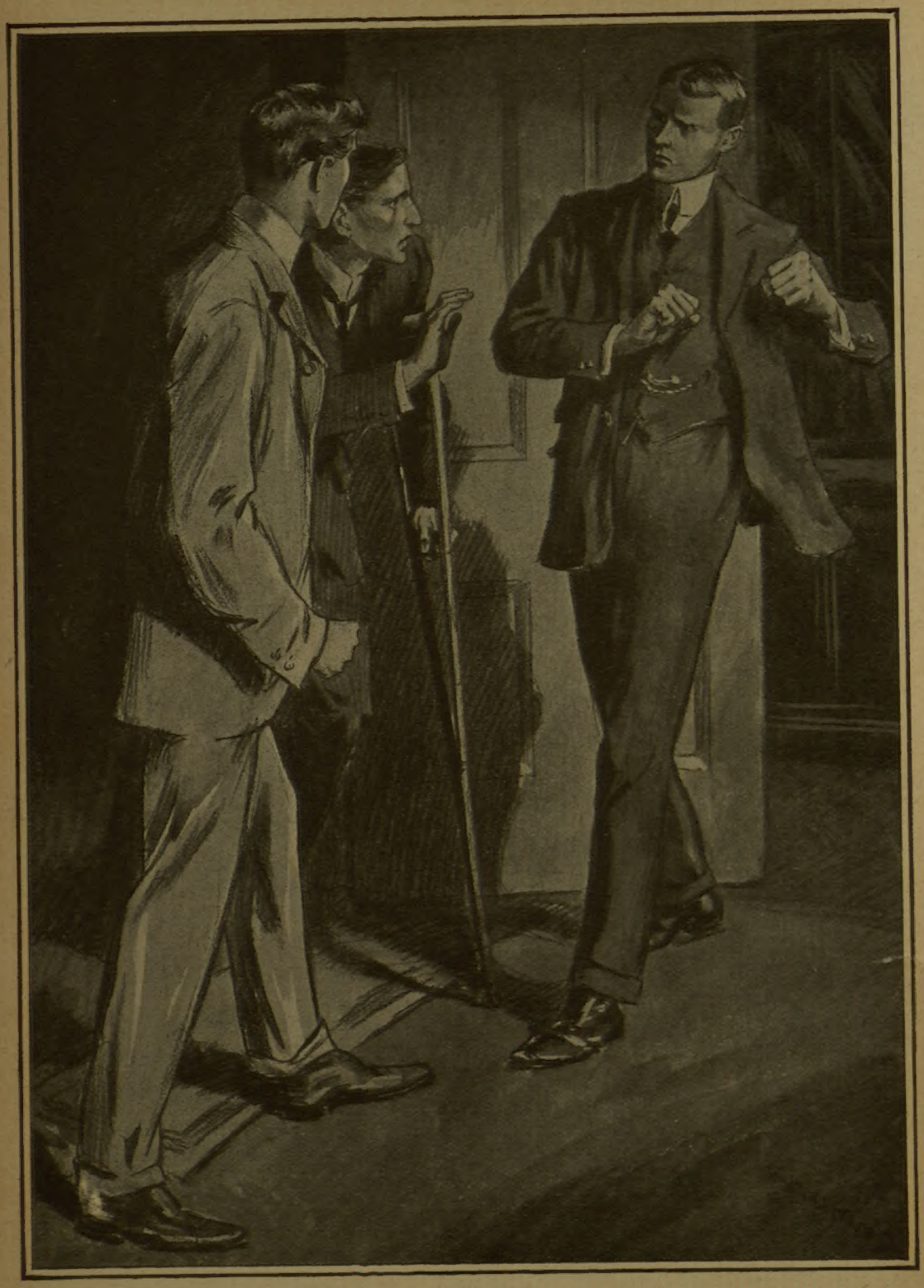
2. Chocolate is an excellent food to train on.



3. But don't make a fuss if the automatic emporium happens to be out of order—

4. *Lift* the lot ! !

Drawn by M. A. M'Cormick.



ERPINGHAM'S RIGHT ARM WENT INSTINCTIVELY ACROSS HIS CHEST AND HIS LEFT SHOT OUT.

THE CAPTAIN

A MAGAZINE FOR BOYS AND "OLD BOYS"

VOL. XVI. OCTOBER, 1906 No. 91.

THE INFORMER

A Public-School Story.

BY FRED SWAINSON.

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell.

CHAPTER I.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

I, FRANK FIRMIN, who tell this tale, hardly come into the story, and do not even then matter one little bit. Like the chorus in a Greek play, I make my comment, and explain things when necessary; but that's all. From one side of school-life—and isn't it the bright side too?—I was debarred. "Crutch and Toothpick" I was to all and sundry from the day when first I limped along Harford's pavements; and "old Firmin" to any friends in the Fifth and the Sixth when I stumped into their studies for tea or polite conversation in my last year or so of school days. But I think no one could spin this yarn of Erpingham as well as I, unless, indeed, Dick should tell it himself. But this, I am sure, he would never do.

* * * * *

My people and Anson's are neighbours; and consequently, when Arthur bade farewell to his preparatory school and entered upon Harford's stage, old Anson asked me to give an eye to the youngster, and generally to see him over his first few fences, and Mrs. Anson, I remember, cooed to me for at least half an hour, in the end leaving me rather mixed as to whether I had a noble character or Arthur had. Anyhow, it all amounted to this: Would I see young Arthur wasn't bullied? And would I see that his fine, sensitive spirit wasn't broken in the rough and tumble of school life? The dear lady seemed to think we bullied on the slightest provocation at Harford. Of course, I promised. So, on the first day of the midsummer term, I travelled up to school with master Arthur, took him into Harbour's—his house, gave him the lie of the land, so to speak, and gave him—to his greater satisfaction perhaps—a heavy tea in my own den. My fag, Bob Leaf, came in, and my labours on behalf of Arthur came to an end with tea. Bob took young Anson in tow as—I think the simile's all right—a Cunarder might take a frail egg-shell, racing cutter that had strayed from Cowes into mid Atlantic. Bob had been at Harford six months, at the outside. When the pair had gone I called on all my friends in Crosse's—Mordaunt, Bolton, &c., but they were all either out or busy. So, tempted by the fine night, I hobbled across the fields to the boat-house, intending to scull up the river as far as the broken water below the Hunter's Leap. When I got to the float I could not see any youngster whom I could press for cox, so I turned away, and went slowly down the towing-path. Very few school boats had gone down stream, and I had the path to myself. I watched the hunched-up voles nibbling busily among the reeds, but, when they caught sight of me, as they always did in the end, they dropped into the water with a sounding "plunk," like so many plummets of lead. A kingfisher shot out across stream into the opposite bank, a green and purple flash, and I thought I might as well watch him at his fishing. I have watched kingfishers many an hour. There he sat, as motionless as a stone, upon his perch a foot above the water, across the river. I dropped my crutch in the grass and sat down.

In five minutes he went off swiftly up stream, flying low, almost on the water, and I saw him wheel into the osier beds, out of sight. When I looked down stream I saw the reason. A punt was coming slowly round the bend.

There were two in the punt, Leaf lolling luxuriously among the cushions, and young Anson, that callow Harfordian of a couple of hours' status upon whom I had to keep an eye. Even without my plighted faith to old Anson I should probably have kept my eye on Arthur. He knew, apparently nothing about punting. He dug the pole into the water and thrust, and the craft spun round. It revolved like the earth round its own axis, and got nowhere in particular. As for Leaf, at every yaw of the boat, at every futile effort of the punter to keep the head to the stream, he fairly screamed with laughter. Arthur got savage: he jabbed viciously into the water, with the result that each stroke cancelled the previous one. The boat bucketed around, now broadside on, now heading up stream, now heading for the bank. The performance was a weird one, and, in ordinary circumstances, would have drawn laughter unchastened as Leaf's. But a thought came that made Arthur's punting seem anything but a joke to me. Leaf was giving young Anson his first punting lesson over the worst stretch of water he could have picked out in the length and breadth of the Hare. The river, swirling round the bend, has scoured the bed into holes, here and there so deep that I have brought out barbel from some of them. To any punter who knows his pole may not find bottom, it's safe enough; but for a beginner, and a rank bad one at that, it's as bad as bad can be. I mentally promised my fag something unpleasant for coaching Anson over a honeycomb. I got up and hurried down the path towards the bend. When Leaf heard my angry hail he rolled over sharply towards my bank, and Arthur sent the pole with a vicious dig into the water. What I had been expecting to happen did. The pole went under water; Arthur followed it with his arms until his wrists were in the water, and while he was bent double, Leaf's little roll put the final touch to a piece of grim business. The lad followed the pole, plunging head foremost into the river.

Then I murmured with agony, "Can he swim?"

The answer wasn't long in coming, though one counts time in cases like this by heart beats. The pole came up, and went swirling down stream; but I didn't see the boy. I was helpless. Never had I known the horror of my utter helplessness until then. The punt had sheered off into mid-river, and I saw Leaf standing up, throwing off his coat, and gazing into the water. The lad was going to give his life for his one hour's friend. I can see him standing there as I write these lines.

My eyes were on that cruel, smoothly flowing water, when a boat shot past the punt. I saw the sculls pulled in, and a young fellow standing up in his rocking skiff. He shouted fiercely to Leaf, "Sit down," and the next moment he had plunged into the river. He was out of sight, and the bubbles alone showed where he was. He came up within the minute and he was not alone, he had the boy. Together, they went down stream, the swimmer holding young Anson's shoulders high above the water. He made for the punt, cutting slantingly across the strong current, drew alongside, and coolly, without any suspicion of grab, held the gunwale. "Get to the end," he said to Leaf, "and pull him in." He worked his way to the stern. Leaf seized Arthur by the shoulders and pulled him in. In a dozen strokes the swimmer retrieved his skiff. I hurried along the bank. My feelings I can't describe, but you will see I had been keeping an eye on young Anson with a vengeance. "There's landing farther down," I shouted.

"I see," shouted the swimmer cheerily. A hundred yards down stream he thrust in gently the two craft, and I, scrambling down the bank, pulled them safely on to the sandy spit. Leaf seemed deadly sick, but Arthur merely looked most awfully limp. He sat up, brushing back his streaming locks, and coughed up water and choked alternately. He had, at most, swallowed more Hare water than was good for him. His rescuer contemplated them both for a moment, and then said critically to me, "No damage done, I think?"

"As it happens, no," said I unsteadily, "but what might have been! One, if not two——"

"Oh, don't worry like that," he cut in. "The other youngster would have had him in a brace of shakes."

"And Anson would have had *him* in rather less than that. Besides, look." I waved my arm from bank to bank. At the bend for yards they rose up straight and bare as a six-foot wall.

He glanced across the river, and was

silent. I knew there wasn't the ghost of a chance for Anson, or for Leaf either, if he had gone to the rescue; and the youth saw it. "Anyhow, it was perfectly simple," said he quietly, "and it was your shout that made me think something was wrong. But hadn't we better get the youngster home! No good mixing shock and cold. Know anything of him?"

"Harford, Harbour's house. I'll take him."

rather think so! Mine is Firmin, Crosse's house."

He took my eager, outstretched hand, with a little heightened colour. Then he collared hold of the woe-begone and shivering Anson, and started off on the towing-path at a fair round pelt for school. "See you later, I hope, Erpingham," I bellowed after him.

"Thanks," he called back, without turning round. I watched them speeding along the

THE LAD FOLLOWED THE POLE, PLUNGING HEAD FOREMOST INTO THE RIVER.

"No need, really, thanks; I'm Harford myself."

I stared. I thought I knew every Harfordian out of junior school, but this six-foot youth, with the palpable senior air about him, had never come into my view. I stared again beyond excuse.

"Just came to-day, you know," he said, gravely explaining himself. "Crosse's house, name Erpingham, very much at your service."

"Oh!" said I with a gasp, "I should

towing-path for a minute or two, and then turned to the wretched Leaf. A glance at my fag's ashy face told me this was no time for a curtain lecture; so I fastened the punt to Erpingham's skiff, motioned Leaf to the lines, and myself sculled back to the school float. Leaf said nothing, not a word, but sat with the lines over his shoulders. He looked as though he saw ghosts on the water.

CHAPTER II.

KENT'S OPINIONS.

AS I was passing into my room the next study door opened, and Erpingham came out. He had changed, and stood up garbed in Harfordian black.

"Thought I heard you, Firmin. Anson's not a penny the worse. But what about my boat? Had I——?"

"I brought her up to the school float, Erpingham, and I must tell you——"

"Firmin, come in here," said Erpingham, precipitately, waving me into the study.

"There's a seat. Now, look here, will you, please, let this ducking affair drop? It was the simplest matter in the world, sort of thing boatmen do every day, the summer long, and bleating mammas rain sovereigns, and the nursemaids. . . . I simply happened to be there. Nothing more."

I said a few words of my *in loco parentis* status, and Erpingham smiled.

"I see how you felt, Firmin. You had a bad five minutes, naturally. I'd pull Leaf's ears for him and dock him his cricket until Anson can swim and punt. I should think that would cure his foolery. What do you think of my den? Feels horribly raw and new yet."

I went to his open bookcase. There in serried ranks, were our school texts, as Erpingham said, "horribly raw and new."

I had often wondered who first buys a new Smith's, or a new Liddell and Scott's. Well, Erpingham manifestly had. Instead of our usual much-autographed, battered, dog-eared dictionaries, descending to us from heaven knows what original buyer, his hadn't a crease in their shining backs. He had brought to Harford none of his old books. Whereat I wondered. Erpingham had drawn up a chair to the window, and, astride, watched me pottering round his den, throwing in a remark now and then, but, for the most part, looking out of the window into the High, where Harfordians were flitting about in all their waning glory of tweeds and vivid neckties. He didn't seem over cheerful, I thought. His room had been newly papered since Lancaster had gone and he had already hung up his prints, all good. There were two or three photographs of his father, a big, strong, burly man, his mother, and a girl of fifteen or sixteen, pretty as a picture. I didn't require, really, his laconic explanation, "My sister Norah." the resemblance to him was so obvious. A little clock ticked gently on the mantelpiece, and his deal table had a swell cover. Altogether Erpingham's looked very snug. But, somehow, the six-foot, good-looking youth, astride his chair, with the square shoulders and the strong hands, the modelling of whose lithe limbs showed under the cloth, hardly seemed to fit his neat and clean but severely bookish room. I would have expected to see a cricket bat in the corner, a cup or two flanking Norah and her mother, and cricket groups and footer XI.s or XV.s on the wall memorials of June's smooth green fields or November's torn muddy turf.

My survey ended, Erpingham brought his chair round, and, with rather a wry smile, said: "I'm quite at sea, Firmin, about Harford. I'm in the Fifth, classical, and I'm due at Asquith's at 7.30 to-morrow morning. Whereabouts is the place?"

"I'll drop you *en route*, Erpingham, if you like, as I attend Forder's next door."

"Thanks. By the way, Firmin, what sort of fellow's Forder?"

"The Head? Exactly what the Rugby kid said of Temple. A beast . . . but a just beast."

"So I thought," said Erpingham, grimly.

"He's the only man that matters here, really," said I, thinking of our "just beast" with a mingled awe and admiration, "but if you give him the last ounce you have in you he's content.'

"Does he always know just when you're at your last ounce?" asked Erpingham.

"Always, and that's what makes him simply great. If you've come here to work, Erpingham——"

"I have," said he, quietly.

"Then you'll find Forder as placid as the mill pond that makes the wheels go round."

"And Asquith, Crosse, and the others?" asked Erpingham.

"Decent, nearly all. Help a fellow no end if he wants it, and shows them he does. Forder doesn't care what the fellows want. It's what he wants. Just the difference, there, you see. There are Blues, of course, who'll put the 'Varsity edge on a fellow's games and all that——"

"I see," said Erpingham. "Somebody for you, Firmin, I think."

Jim Mordaunt, Kent, Bolton, Gale, had come in a body to give me a call, and through Erpingham's half-opened door had seen me. They poured in. "Hello, Toothpick," said Kent, "moved into Lancaster's old room?"

I introduced Crosse's astonished seniors to Erpingham, and he looked at them *seriatim* with that curiously deliberative air of his. He offered Jim his chair, and waved the rest with a smile to his table. "I'd like to see if it's as strong as it looks," said he. He stood with his back to his ticking clock against the mantelpiece, and looked at me, and listened to their kindly chaff, as though this sort of thing was perfectly familiar to him.

When I rose to go, thinking Erpingham had had enough of us, Kent, in his heavy jesting way, said: "Erpingham, were you a Backward or a Troublesome that you've come here?"

"I'll inquire, Kent, and let you know," said he, meeting exactly Bill's heavy banter.

"When I saw you uncoiling fold by fold from this chair," said Jim, with his kindly smile to me, "I thought Frank had sacked Leaf, and been poaching fags of a larger growth."

"Never fag without two testimonials to character, Mordaunt; and you fellows haven't left Firmin with a shred. I gather he's a blood-thirsty monster."

Jim smiled in his lazy way. "Will you have some supper with us in my study, Erpingham? Firmin's coming to retrieve his character."

"Thanks, Mordaunt, but 'fraid I can't. Rather busy, you know."

Jim nodded carelessly, but Kent, said with his usual gibe, "A letter to mother, of course."

"Grandmother, Kent," said Erpingham, quietly, as he saw the last of us over his mat.

We adjourned to Jim's corner study, and there chatted over our Easter doings, and enjoyed what Jim's people—who must have adored him—had put up in some luncheon baskets.

Bolton, who is rather a silent youth, said, "Who's your friend, Firmin?"

"I've only known him three hours," said I. "His name's Erpingham."

"Is that all, Toothpick?" asked Gale.

"Well, hardly," said I, and I gave Jim's study a little sketch of that bitter five minutes I spent on the Hare's bank that afternoon.

Kent's comment was in the very words of Erpingham. "He happened to be there."

"Thank God," said I.

"Where is he?" asked Jim.

"Fifth, classical."

"Where does he come from?" asked Bolton.

"Don't know," said I.

"A public school," said Jim thoughtfully. "Erpingham's exactly our run."

"The point is not where he comes from, but why," said Kent.

"I'd like to hear you ask him," chuckled Bolton, with a twinkle in his eye, "always supposing he didn't feel inclined to tell you, Bill."

"I bet," said Bill, "he wouldn't feel inclined."

"Look here, Kent," said I angrily, "you're just talking rot at large about a fellow you haven't known ten minutes."

"Frank's quite right," said Mordaunt, who had been scribbling on a half-sheet of paper and murmuring to Gale, hardly attending to what we had been saying. "Shut up, Kent. I'm asking him to play to-morrow in a house side. He looks as though he'd seen a bat before to-day, and he'll have finished that letter to his grandfather by to-morrow."

"Grandmother," corrected Kent, who was impervious to banter. "But I'll bet you a shilling he won't play, Jim."

"All right," said Mordaunt. "I'll see him now."

"Any one else risk a shilling?" said Kent, grinning affably upon us all when Mordaunt had gone.

"I bet when I'm interested," said Gale. "I'm not here."

Curious to say, I was, rather. What had struck Jim about Erpingham had struck me, too. He had not the figure, the look, the air, of either a lounger or a bookish fellow. And yet, somehow, I felt that Kent had noticed something in Erpingham's manner, —a certain reserve, I would call it—and was probably right.

Jim came back at the end of five minutes. He felt in his pocket and spun Bill a shilling. "Erpingham can't play."

"Why won't he play, Jim?" asked Kent, pocketing his coin.

"He said he couldn't," I corrected.

"I didn't ask him, but he mentioned that he'd come here to work."

"Of course he has," said Bill, his sneer coming up as he spoke.

"Why not?" asked I angrily. "We're all here for that, I take it."

"Then you're jolly well mistaken, Firmin," snapped Bill. "My maximum is Forder's minimum, and, more or less, that applies to every fellow here except you, my boy."

"But," resumed Kent, after a moment's pause, "candidly, I don't like the sort of fellow who tells us he's not going to play, but says he's going to work instead. Too much

of the 'ighly superior person for my fancy."

"Bill," I broke in, as solemn as I could be for anger, as I saw that Kent's words had left an impression, "for some er—er reason you've got a prejudice against Erpingham, though you've only known him ten minutes. That's utter rot, as I said before."

"Hold a minute, Firmin," said Kent. "and I'll explain my· er—er prejudice.

ERPINGHAM STOOD AGAINST THE MANTELPIECE.

Your friend refuses two of Jim's invitations, and takes us to witness that he's going to work. My aunt! Too high and too dry, Frankie, for a commencement."

Gale, who was frankly bored at the turn the conversation had taken, switched us off neatly at this point on to Harford's cricket, and we talked bat and ball and wickets until the bell went, and we cut our several ways to bed. I felt, somehow, that Erpingham had not made quite the same impression on Crosse's most important seniors as he had on me, and was sorry for it.

On the morrow I dropped my new friend at Asquith's at first school, and he accepted with more than mere polite acquiescence my invitation to breakfast. I passed the news on to young Leaf, and in all my Harford days I never drew up to better coffee, eggs and bacon, better rolls and butter, than on that morning. Leaf, evidently, had no prejudice against Erpingham.

CHAPTER III.

ERPINGHAM'S WORK.

THE appearance of Erpingham at Harford created something of a sensation in the school generally, and Crosses' had a particular interest in it. New Harfordians are, of course, very callow young hopefuls, with the marks of the preparatory school plainly showing all over them, but Erpingham came to us with all the signs of full-blown seniority. Why he came only he and Forder knew. Whence he came was an equal mystery. A mystery it remained for many days, but, as a matter of interest, it faded at the end of his first week. Dick's—for by this time he was Dick to me—Dick's manner was beautifully calculated to this end—he was civil to every one, and wrapped up in his own affairs. Crosse's fellows passed the word that their new arrival was slogging hard at school work, Harfordians could see for themselves that he didn't play, and about such an uninteresting personality the fellows could not be expected to be interested long. They regarded Erpingham's appearance at Harford as one of Forder's occasional whims.

My friendship with Erpingham dated from Leaf's famous breakfast. I told him that Lancaster and I had shared breakfast and

tea for over two years, and if he liked to club with me I should infinitely prefer it to a solitary meal. Dick was only too delighted; I could see he did not fancy brekker in the dining-room—a solitary senior among a herd of noisy, squeaky fags, and I pointed out to him that, being neither in the Sixth nor a monitor, he was not entitled to a fag according to the immemorial laws of Harford, and that setting up housekeeping without the aid of fagdom was nothing great. He saw it in all its beauty, and thanked me with warmth. "How will Leaf like the extra fag?" said he at last, with a smile.

"You say 'punt' to him, Erpingham, if he grumbles. "But Bob's a decent little kid; he won't."

Crosse's had some idea that Erpingham was working, but only I had any idea of the extent. Every morning I heard his little clock ringing furiously for a second or two, and within five minutes up would go Erpingham's window, and I could hear the tinkling of the water as he poured it into the basin. Then came the slap of books on the table, and a chair creaked as it was drawn up. The first, the second, the third time I heard it I drew out my watch from my pillow. The hour hand was always dead on five. Dick was getting up to read! I whistled softly to myself from utter astonishment before I dropped off again to sleep.

At the end of the week, at breakfast, I complimented him.

A faint blush crept over his face, and his mouth twisted into a wry smile. "It's necessary, Frank. I'm in for an exam. in June, and there are parts of it of which I know nothing, so far. I simply have to grind. I don't pretend to like it."

"Let me have a look at the syllabus, Dick, after breakfast;" said I, and when he, naturally, shied at the idea of my prying into his affairs, I added, copying his own worried smile, "exams. are all I'm good for, you know."

Dick brought me the syllabus and a sheaf of previous questions, and I pondered over them for a good hour meeting some old friends of mine as I read. To a public-school boy suckled on classics these classics were absurdly easy, the sort of thing Harford demands from the Fourth, but there were at least three papers on science and one on mathematics which, elementary though they were, demanded rather more than the alphabet. If Dick had spent his time going through the usual classical mill, as I shrewdly suspected, I rather hoped he'd been leaving Greece and Rome severely alone for a few months. I certainly thought a lot about my friend that morning, and when we came out of the hall after dinner, I hobbled in to Dick's study with his papers.

"Well, what about the classics?" I asked, and I couldn't suppress a smile.

"Oh, well, they're footle," Dick said. "Go on."

"The mathematics?"

"Possible. I rather like them, you know. But I've done so little."

"Thought so. And every classical Fifth at Harford would probably say the same. Now the science?"

"Never done any. Ignorant as dirt. Here's a first question," said Dick, selecting a paper and holding forth. "'How would you make a vernier?' On my word of honour honour I never heard of the beast."

"Been working for this before you came to Harford?"

"I had about a month; I spent it mostly over this tackle," and Dick held up a natural science paper.

"Wise youth."

I felt, I saw, just what was Dick's case. He would have to have pretty good natural ability, and have the grit to keep up his sheer hard smugging until the exam. came round. It was at least, if not simply, a race against time.

"Dick, will you do what I ask you?" I said finally.

"That depends," said Erpingham, looking at me rather curiously.

"Well, I took this examination myself two years ago last Christmas, though I haven't told any one. But I came out in honours."

Erpingham said quietly, "I'm no swell, Frank."

"Swell!" said I, bitterly. "This sort of thing is all I can do. But you see I ought to know what I'm talking about. If you like I'll draw you out a scheme for a dash-and-scramble shot, the necessary minimum. You work through that, and answer all the questions in the text-books. Opposite those that stump you erect a cross in red ink. Do the same with the maths,. and leave me the books at breakfast time, and at tea you'll find full solutions neatly worked. I know your books pretty well. Old acquaintances in fact."

Dick stared at me with wide-open eyes. Then his blush faded and left him very white.

"Frank, you're awfully good. I've never met with a better fellow than you."

"Is it a bargain?" said I hastily. Erping-

ham put out his hand and grasped mine in a grip that made me wince. "I suppose, Dick, you must take the June exam.? Can't wait till Christmas?"

"No. I promised my people for June." There was a long pause, and then Erpingham said something that made me jump. "Frank. I suppose you wonder why I'm here."

I looked Erpingham squarely in the eyes, I hope. "I have wondered, Dick. But, on on my honour, I have no curiosity."

"I'll tell you, if you like."

"You won't, old fellow, except you very badly want to."

"Then, I'd rather not now."

I put out my hand this time, and felt from that moment that between Dick and me there was a bond that would not be lightly broken.

I spent that half-holiday in a work of horrible butchery. I took Erpingham's text-books, hung, drew, and quartered them, placed fences, so to speak, round the useless *lubrica exta*, drew attention to the choicer morsels with red ink, and gave the choicest plain indication with N.B.s. Then I handed them to Erpingham. "Dick," I said, put your clock for 4 A.M. if you like, but let us have Saturdays, from noon on, to ourselves."

"Rather," said he, with something more like a happy smile than I had yet seen.

I have seen fellows working double tides for a fortnight or so before an exam., but I never knew any one stick to the table as Erpingham did. His clock went at five or before; except for an hour's walk along the river and back after dinner he was either at schools or in his study, pinning himself down to subjects that he hated, until bedtime. And I am very sure, however a regular beak might scoff at my tabloid doses of knowledge, my plan answered capitally with Dick, because he worked it honestly. But think of what study meant to Erpingham, hearing through his open window the patter of fellows' feet out in the High stringing down to the Meads for cricket, or the soft-muffled padding of those who were going for a grind on the Hare; when the sharp scent of new-mown grass blown across the fields, stealing into his room with the sunshine and the twitter of the swallows, literally called him to come out.

But our Saturdays! Well, those few Saturdays before Dick went up to town for his examination will always remain with me as the brightest days of my life at Harford.

We invariably filed down to the Meads after dinner, and, finding a shady corner, watched the cricket going on in the sunshine. Dick said little one way or the other about Harford's game, but he always made a point of seeing Mordaunt bat, and when Jim came out of the pavilion, trailing his bat, with an odd little mannerism quite his own, Dick stiffened to attention. Mordaunt was Harford's keeper too. To see Jim stalk down the crease after an over, his gloves somehow adding length to his arms, to watch him plant his feet carefully, and then see him settle down when the bowler was on the run, was to see the preliminaries of art. He was never in a hurry, he had no suspicion of flurry; the ball was gathered and swept towards the bails in the same movement, then came an almost imperceptible pause for the unwary foot dragging over the line, and then the ball was lobbed gently back to the bowler. It mattered not whether he was standing up to fast, medium, or slow; whether the bowler was working the off theory or the leg, his steady poise behind the bails was the same. A yard farther back, the better to judge Wren's leg express, was perhaps his only concession to speed. His hands seemed to have the attraction of magnets. A hurtling return, full, or pitching just short—and these are brutes—was gathered in and sent back as cleanly and easily as though he were returning the length balls of a new bowler. Jim's graceful, tall figure, flicking balls through the slips, opening his shoulders for a drive, drawing a ball to the leg, was grace with knowledge. Dick saw as much the first match, and when Mordaunt had gone back to the pavilion just two short of his century, we two looked at each other as to whether we should move. We didn't want any anti-climax after that performance.

"You have some decent fellows in the XI., Frank, but for blood and breeding give me Mordaunt."

That Erpingham knew the game I found out pretty soon; indeed, I would have been pretty blind not to. "You've your own reasons, Dick," I said, chaffing him, "but that's your place on a Saturday afternoon."

I was sorry the minute the words were spoken.

Erpingham flinched, exactly as a horse might do when it hears the lash, and he went quite white. For a minute or two he said nothing, but ran his eye over the field which I had included in my sweep. The flag floated lazily in the late May sunshine, as though it were benignantly blessing the privileged who lolled on the pavilion seats beneath. The

turf was ringed with a living border of Harfordians, sober dowagers rustled on the edge of the crowd, and girls with their bright dresses and brighter faces flitted here and there, and when, meeting friends, they stopped in little groups and knots for a minute or two, made pools and splashes of colour on the green field. Old Harfordians, who might have been at school with Forder, drew gently on their cigars, and assured each other solemnly that Mordaunt almost came up to some brilliant Harfordian of their time. Almost—but not quite. Jim's dismissal made the customary quiver. You heard a whisper all round. "That's Mordaunt," and the women gave him their quick all-over look, and the girls pondered him slowly as their brothers whispered what Wisden had said in his last issue. Dick's eyes and ears took all in—the living green of the turf rolling in velvet smoothness up to the seats, the purple-breasted, tireless swallows patrolling the level sward in their lightning rush an inch from the ground, the white players grouped around the wickets, like worshippers round a shrine, the elms in the far background, in their freshest, greenest, tenderest leaf, and overhead, the blue sky, flecked with straying clouds.

Surely, cricket is the cleanest, sweetest, kindest game in the world.

Dick's colour came back to him slowly as he looked and thought. His eyes brightened, though his mouth was savage.

"I came here to grind, Frank. And the hardest grind of all is watching this."

After tea, Dick generally pulled up the river as far as the Hunter's Leap, where the Barl comes rushing down from the hills and

WITH DICK MY LUCK WAS ALWAYS GOOD.

throws her tumbling waters into the more placid Hare.

He would nose our skiff off the quieter waters into the smaller stream, and I'd try for some of the Barl trout. Before Dick came, when I had to fish from the bank, over seven-eighths of the likely pools I had never dropped a fly. But now Dick flicked the sculls lightly through the torn, racing waters, wormed his way through the jaws of the black, dripping boulders, and nosed our little craft on some sandy spit at the tail of a race, whilst I quartered every inch of the deep pools. The Barl trout are not chalk-stream fish,

heavy and sluggish, but are big enough and fierce enough to make it touch and go with a fine line every time they are struck. With Dick my luck was always good. You know how a trout takes the fly—a sweeping rush and a lightning glimpse of golden flanks. My coaxing a lusty fellow out of his roaring waters, holding him when he wanted to break me in the shallows, checking gently his furious rush up stream, reeling him up—with judgment—when he tired, and so out into a quiet patch where he could be pulled gently over the net, Dick found good fun. He always tipped me a solemn wink as my net was lifted, bagging heavily, into the boat; we couldn't hear ourselves speak for the roaring waters. Then, when the fading light warned us of lock-up, and the number of the slain was eminently respectable, we would scurry down stream into the Hare, when I would take the sculls and pull down to Harford.

Dick's compliment on my first day's sport made me blush.

"Strikes me, Frank, you're a cut above the average chuck-it-and-chance-it artist."

Ah! those were halcyon days. And now, whenever Harford comes to my mind, I always see her as Dick and I saw her coming home across the meadows. I see again the grey school buildings, the chapel spire pricking into the sky, the Houses among the broad bosomed trees, the lights just beginning to twinkle in the studies, as the fellows came home from field and river, Meads with the flight of pavilion seats glimmering greyly in the twilight, the playing-fields rolling up to the shadowy elms, the water meadows, and the dark, gleaming, silent river between.

Ah! those were halcyon days.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INFORMER.

DICK went up to London for his examination, and every night I loitered outside the station gates to hear the news. Dick passed me the day's papers, and, when I saw what had been set, I knew in a moment my rush-and-scramble minimum had not been a bad one. Dick, however, took far from a rosy view of his achievements, and was pretty certain he'd come a cropper. Dick though, was just one of those fellows who are profoundly astonished when they pass. "Well, I finish to-morrow at noon, Frank," he said, "and, please the pigs, the day after I get up at a respectable hour,"

Then I unfolded a little plan, the cause of many weary months of misery and woe to Dick, to Mordaunt, to many others, to me. If ever an idea was "rigged with curses dark" from the beginning that was. "The school are playing a match against Worthington's XI. at Gleam to-morrow. I'll pull down the river if you'll get out at the Junction, and we'll see the fag-end of the cricket, potter round Gleam, and scull to school before lock-up. How'd that suit, Dick?"

"Ripping," said Erpingham. Then, as though he always summed up Harford cricket in Jim: "Jove, Frank, I'd like to see Mordaunt making runs against the clock."

"Then you won't. Jim's split a finger. He's not playing. And, though this won't interest you, Bill Kent's crocked, so we'll be short of slows," said I.

"Mordaunt and Kent seem pretty thick, don't they? Somehow, they don't seem cut out for each other," said Dick, who admired Jim immensely.

This seemed a funny thing for Dick to say to me. Two hours before I had had tea with Jim and his chum and Mrs. Mordaunt, who had run down from town for the afternoon. She picked me up on Meads, and carried me off to her boy's study, where we four talked one against the other—the jolliest meal imaginable. As we walked afterwards to the station, she and I a little behind, she said: "Jim seems very fond of Kent, don't you think?"

"Great friends," said I, and when I wanted to explain why, for the first time I rather wondered why. "Well, they're in the same house and in the XI.," I added, following my own thoughts.

"Is Kent a very nice fellow, Frank?" she asked me very quietly.

I said, a little sharply: "I've heard nothing wrong of Kent, Mrs. Mordaunt."

"No, no," she said hurriedly, "I don't quite mean that," and then with a smile: "Are you as big chums as ever, Frank?"

"Of course," said I, "of course." And yet, almost before the words were out of my mouth, it flashed across my mind that I had not seen quite so much of Jim as in the old days, not so much since—well, since Erpingham came. Mrs. Mordaunt's words made me see dates rather unpleasantly. She was looking at me intently, smiling and yet serious.

"Well, Frank," she said at last, "I hope you'll always be Jim's great friend." Then with a jolly friendly smile: "Couldn't you and Mr. Er-ping-ham take Jim into partnership, now?"

So Jim or someone had told her of Dick! I saw myself hobbling between Jim and Dick—the two fellows I liked best in the world—and shining with reflected glory.

"Mordaunt, Firmin, and Erpingham sounds prettily," putting Jim—oh those mothers! —first.

"Rather!" said I, like a kid.

We shook hands and parted, and the last words were for me: "Remember, Frank."

"What have you to remember, Toothpick?" asked Mordaunt, as we moved away.

"Your mater was telling me the name of a jolly firm," said I.

"Then, she put you in, I bet," said Jim, with his mother's smile.

When I went down the High in the morning to second school, I saw the XI. climbing into the brakes opposite the old school gate, their bags piled up under the driver's feet. A little knot of Sixth were tossing for the remaining seats, when Forder came out of his door and fingered his cap as the XI. spotted him, giving the fellows his usual quick glance as he hurried away. Jim Mordaunt, his left hand gloved, was perched beside the driver, chaffing the Sixth, to whom the fates had been unkind, and, as we settled down to our morning grind with Forder, came the rumble of the brake to trouble thought.

I took it very leisurely down stream, almost crawled in fact under the banks, and it was nearly four when I whipped in the sculls at Gleam. Gleam is a rather pretty little, sleepy county town, where one wonders whatever the bank clerks have to do, and where the many solicitors get their clients. Lend each other money, or draw up each other's wills, I suppose. I pottered about the old quiet streets, bought postcards for the home authorities, and generally killed time just as I like to do. Then I thought I'd find our fellows and give them the benefit of my presence until Dick should come to find me as per arrangement. I was plodding along to the ground, when a tall, thin, gaunt figure, which I knew as well as my own crutch, caught my eye, and I straightened up a little as if, save the mark! I had been dressing from the right. Forder always has that effect on me. In another moment the Head and I had met. One glance at his thin, pale lips, drawn across his mouth in a straight line, his grey eyebrows twitching over his chill, deep-set eyes, and I knew I had run across him in one of his cold, biting rages. "What are you doing here, Firmin?" he rapped out

"Erpingham is coming off the London train, sir, and we were to scull up to Harford when the cricket was over."

"You have an *exeat*?"

"Yes, sir."

"Whose?"

"Mr. Crosse's."

"Have you seen Mordaunt here?"

"No, sir. I sculled down the river."

He turned on his heel, just noticing my salute, and I followed in his wake, wondering why he was in a paddy, and, above all, displaying it in Gleam, nettled, too, that he should ask me my business and demand my *exeat*. And why, in the name of little fishes, ask me about Mordaunt?

Our fellows were out in the field, but, as Worthington's band were struggling to avoid an innings defeat, there was nothing very exhilarating from a spectator's point of view.

A little group of the Sixth were following the game languidly, but they smiled genially, with a twinge of amusement, too, I thought,—as the gods might smile at Hephæstos—when I hobbled up to them.

"Good heavens, Toothpick, where's the other twin?" said Link, making room for me in his crowd.

"Meaning Erpingham?" said I.

"I did, my son," said Link.

"He's coming by-and-bye," said I. "Any of you seen Forder?"

The Harfordians looked at one another curiously, half anxiously, half perplexedly. Then Sale, a fellow of Bonner's house, turned to me. "Seen Forder, eh? Well, rather. Eyes like a grey wolf's, and a mouth like an Inquisition torturer's."

"He's been here demanding *exeats* of all and sundry. By Jupiter! I'd be very sorry for the fellow who'd forgotten that little formality," said Bull, Sale's inseparable friend.

"Forder's in the deuce of a paddy, Frank," said Sale again. "The question is, about what?"

And then Bull, who had the quotation habit badly—worse than I—began: "'He that hath light within his own clear breast, may sit i' the sunshine——'"

Sale unceremoniously stuck an elbow among his friend's ribs. "Oh, shut up, you fool! Have you seen him, Firmin?"

"Five minutes ago. He's looking for Mordaunt, I gather."

"For Jim!" echoed the fellows as one man. "What's he want with Jim?"

"Well, don't keep on gasping like that," said I, impatiently. "How do I know? Where is he?"

"He and Kent sheered off when the game was nicely warmed up," said Gale to me. "They've not been on the ground since."

I suppose it isn't curious really, but I thought instantly of Mrs. Mordaunt's two-edged words of the previous night, and I felt vaguely uneasy when the solemn Gale dropped in Kent's name so casually.

"Oh, well," said I. "Live and learn. If Jim's been playing marbles in Gleam's gutters, or any other impossible thing, we'll hear of it soon enough. Hallo! Bolton's got old Worthington's wicket."

But there was something in the minds of all the little knot of Harfordians, and they paid no attention to the cricket. Bull grumbled, "Don't gas so much about the glory of Crosse's men, Toothpick," as though my elbow had rattled among his ribs. The fellows kept a tense silence, looking on at the game, but missing every point of it. After ten minutes of this sort of thing I yawned, I couldn't see why Forder in a paddy six miles from home should throw Sixth Form fellows into something uncommonly like a funk, when, in the main, they were decent fellows without a vice to their names, bar Bull and his quotes. The cricket came to an end with my gape, and the Harfordians waited for our men to come out of the pavilion, whilst I found that Dick must be about due.

Sure enough, disentangling himself from the crowd of people going out, Erpingham came in at the gate, and I felt that probably he would not be quite so dumb as the rest. He caught sight of our fellows and came across, his tall figure striding over the turf reminding me forcibly of Jim.

He nodded coolly to the Sixth. "Game's over, eh?" he asked.

"School's won, Erpingham," said Sale, briefly. "Innings and er—what's the runs, Bull?"

Dick and I drifted a few yards away. "Well?" said I, anxiously.

"Pretty decent to-day, Frank," he said, cheerfully, "but don't look so beastly cocky, old man. The other papers have ploughed me right enough."

"Here's Forder," I heard Link say, and when I looked up I saw the Head stalking across to us, looking as savage as ever.

"And here's Jim," said Gale.

"And now we'll see what we shall see," said Bull.

Jim strolled across from one of the side entrances, his hands in his pockets, and apparently all his attention on the scoring-board. Forder had seen him too, and checked himself, so that both of them practically stopped together in front of our little party. Jim touched his cap in his own easy, polite way.

"You've not been playing, Mordaunt?" said Forder.

"No, sir. I've split my finger."

"You have an *exeat?*"

"Yes, sir, Mr. Crosse's."

"You came down with the others?"

"Yes, sir."

"What have you been doing all day?"

Jim flushed ever so little, but he looked Forder in the face, drawing himself up squarely, and said, "Watching some of the cricket, sir, and pottering about Gleam."

"That's all you have to say to me?" said Forder, icily.

"Yes, sir," said Jim, never taking his eyes off the Head. "Nothing else."

We looked at both of them in utter astonishment, at the white furious man and the flushed handsome youth opposing a plain, haughty defiance to the other's anger. Astonishment is a mild word for our feelings. I turned to Dick to see what he was making of this wretched public performance. He was as pale as Forder, and if ever I saw anxiety bordering on agony, in my life, I saw that on my friend's face. Jim was opposite him, and Dick's eyes never left his face. His fixed, steady gaze was for Mordaunt alone.

The battle of looks between Jim and Forder lasted perhaps a minute. All at once Forder said to our little group, "Have you seen Erpingham?"

Mordaunt was cool and no mistake. He said, still with the same defiant accent in his voice, "Erpingham's behind you, sir."

Dick got up, his face pallid. Forder wheeled round like a hawk. "Did you come down by the Race train, Erpingham?"

"Yes, sir," said Dick.

"Did you see Mordaunt in the train?"

Dick looked at Forder as though he were dazed, but Forder's eyes were on Dick as though he would read his very heart, and then he dropped his voice to his quietest tone, as Dick said nothing.

While you might count a dozen he waited before he spoke again. "Did you see Mordaunt in the Race train?"

Erpingham's glance went to Mordaunt one fleeting second, but Jim's eyes were on Forder. He made no sign.

Dick said, "Yes."

Forder turned to Jim like a very lion. "Where have you been, Mordaunt?"

"Epsom, sir."

"Who was with you?"

Jim's lips curled bitterly. There was a sneer in his voice as he said, "No one, sir."

"I will see you to-night, Mordaunt, at eight."

Forder turned on his heel and was out of the gate before we broke silence. I looked from Jim to Dick, and they looked at each other. Mordaunt drawled in his silkiest voice, and yet I never heard anything more stabbing even from him: "Hope you like your share in this little business. Erpingham."

"I'm horribly sorry, Mordaunt," said Dick. "I'd like you to believe that."

Mordaunt did not say a word, good, bad, or indifferent. He put his hands in his pockets and strolled towards the pavilion. The others, from Link to Bull, hesitated as to whether they might say something, and finally, covering Erpingham with a glare of contempt, they took Jim's cue and followed him in silence. Dick and I were left alone. He turned to me with an ashen face. "What do you think of it, Frank?"

"Of Mordaunt?"

He nodded.

"Forder will expel him."

Dick sat down on the bench and buried his face in his hands. "And of me?" he said, at length:

"You are your own judge, Dick," I said.

He took this in, but he was never the sort of fellow who funks an issue. "What do you think of my part, Frank?"

"I don't know what I should have done, Dick. But I think I should have let Forder do his worst."

Dick said nothing, but looked me squarely in the face. "I don't know on what footing you stand with Forder, of course," I said,

FORDER'S EYES WERE ON DICK AS THOUGH HE WOULD READ HIS VERY HEART.

after a pause, "only you know, one of the things, the thing, a fellow must not do, according to our laws, is what you have done."

I sat down beside him, and, in a flash, I saw just what would be the upshot of my miserable meeting with Forder in Gleam's quiet streets, the result of my wretched idea.

Dick saw it too, and looked across the field.

At last he said harshly, "What are you going to do, Firmin? Follow the school?"

I got up. That I had never thought of. "Heaven forbid," I said, and I put out my hand instinctively.

He grasped it, and flushed as he did so. "Then I'll worry through, Frank. You're awfully decent, old fellow, to a man when he's down. But Mordaunt!" and Dick stopped in mere funk.

I almost groaned aloud as I thought of Jim, clever, easy-going, good-natured Mordaunt, monitor and the school's idol, fired out of Harford like a common cad.

As we sat there stewing in our own bitter thoughts, Bill Kent hurried across the field towards us. He had just come on the ground. "Hullo, Twins," he said, jocosely, "where's the game?"

"School have won," I said shortly.

"Where's Mordaunt?" he said, with just a shade of anxiety in his tone. "I missed him quarter of an hour ago."

I gazed at Kent with a pondering interest that I had never given him before. He seemed heavy, fleshy, and abominably lazy, and for the first time in my life I looked at him with something like a twinge of disgust. I can't account for this sudden nausea. "There was rather a crush at the station, wasn't there?" said I, venomously.

He looked at me narrowly, and slid his glance away to Erpingham, but Erpingham did not seem to see him.

"Where's Jim?" he said, with a rasping laugh. "You haven't answered yet."

"He's by way of going home, Kent," said I. "Your leg seems all serene. Better have been bowling."

Kent sheered off after his friend. My japes evidently drew blood somewhere. "I'll wager my right hand," said I, "that Kent was with Mordaunt on the Downs."

Erpingham said wearily, "I didn't see him, Frank. Anyhow, Mordaunt didn't split on his chum."

"No," said I bitterly. "He lied beautifully. I suppose we'd better get back, Dick."

Well—we pulled back.

CHAPTER V.

CONSEQUENCES.

THE news which Harford brought from Gleam spread with lightning rapidity through the school. What the fellows thought about the matter can be put in a nutshell. There was one universal howl of execration against Erpingham. Crosse's house, which harboured Dick, was at white heat, and Crosse himself called his seniors together and told them he'd stand no rags under any pretence whatever, and made them entirely responsible for the order of the house. The fellows listened in sullen silence, but Bolton took his courage in both hands, and prepared to tell Crosse what the house thought.

At his first words, though, Crosse cut across the senior's oration, and told Bolton he was an ass—or words to that effect—and that the house just at that moment wasn't capable of thinking at all. If it really would think, he suggested that it should turn its collective wisdom upon the spectacle of a monitor—and a monitor with an influence comparable to Jim's—playing ducks and drakes with school rules and a fine reputation. Crosse was bitter as gall, and, as I listened to his diatribe, I kept my eye on Kent. He did not move a muscle, but when he caught my look his sneer was entirely for my benefit. Crosse gave us something of his choicest irony, and then went out, leaving the fellows sore as well as furious. However, they did their duty, and promised any junior who so much as whispered when he passed Erpingham's study something extra special. The house was still.

I went into Erpingham's room. He was sitting in his arm-chair, his cap on his head. I expect he had sat there since we returned from Gleam. "What time did Forder want Mordaunt, Frank?" he asked me as I came in.

"Eight."

He pulled out his watch, and hurried out. "I'm going to see Forder, Frank. I won't be long. Don't go."

What took place between them I only learned long after, but I heard on the morrow that, as he left the Head, Mordaunt went in. Half an hour afterwards Dick came back, with a face as white as paper and a look of sullen fury in his eye—smouldering, gnawing fury. I had not seen this side of my friend before. He threw open his window as though his room choked him, and to me he seemed like some wild animal in a trap, ready to fasten teeth in the first of his tormentors. I got out of his arm-chair, wherein I had been brooding over our wretched holiday, and conjured up a yawn, though I never felt less like yawning in my life. A fellow in such a red rage as Dick were best left alone. "See you at brekker, Dick. Good-night," and I quietly shut the door of his cage.

I heard him fling himself into his chair in dumb passion, and then all was so quiet in the still house that I could hear the whistle

MORDAUNT WAS HELPLESS IN ERPINGHAM'S GRIP.

of the trains far away across the fields. I sat on the edge of my table, brooding uselessly over the day's tragic happenings, from Crosse's fateful *exeat* to that frenzied pull up the Hare. What irony was hidden in Mrs. Mordaunt's suggestion about Jim, Dick, and me, had she

but known it! I might have sat there an hour, my ears unconsciously listening for the least sound in the next room, when I heard the front door open and a light foot come quickly up the stairs. The newcomer passed my door and stopped at Erpingham's. He turned the handle without any preliminary knock, and I heard Dick slew furiously round in his chair. He was on his feet in a moment. The door shut with its own private jiggle of the tongue in the catch—how well I knew that study door!—but as plainly as though I were in the room I heard a voice say, "You cad!"

The voice was Mordaunt's. The ring in it made me start where I sat. Mordaunt's voice simply palpitated with passion, blind passion and bitter stinging scorn. He might as well have laid a whip across Erpingham's face.

Dick said, after a tense strained pause—it seemed minutes to me—in a low voice: "Get out, Mordaunt."

Jim's voice had made me jump, but when I heard Dick's I shivered.

"I'll go when I'm ready," said Mordaunt.

'Go now," said Erpingham, "before you say any more."

"Why did you come to Harford? Why did they kick you out? I'll know that."

Not a sound reached me for a minute. Then I heard Erpingham stride to the door. Mordaunt's voice asked again with its bitter gibe, "What's Forder going to do for you for this?"

The door was flung open, and Dick said in a choked voice, "Go."

On that word I shuffled out. Erpingham had his hand on Mordaunt's arm, and I saw Mordaunt strike him full in the face.

All the fiends of anger in Erpingham were unchained. He stepped one pace backwards, his right arm went instinctively across his chest, and his left shot out. I suppose I was a fool to spring in between them, but I paid for it. I went down under the blow like a ninepin, and I must have looked a sorry sight squirming on the floor. I scrambled up again, half my face feeling numbed and dead, but I had done my work. Erpingham looked at me with an expression of horror and remorse. He said, "Oh, Frank, do go."

"Get out, Firmin," said Mordaunt, hoarsely.

"You go, Jim," said I, still keeping between the two, and pushing Jim with all my puny strength to the door. Dick brushed me aside as though I had been a fly, and by some trick, I suppose, executed in a trice, he had Jim by the wrists. His voice was thick with passion. "Mordaunt, I've never taken a blow like that from any one but you. And you'll live to repent it. Now go."

Mordaunt was helpless in Erpingham's grip, and before he had even a chance to break loose he was out in the corridor. He was staggering back again, livid with passion. What would have been the upshot each may guess for himself, but Crosse came down the corridor in the very nick of time. He may have suspected something, but he certainly heard nothing, for noise, except my falling, there had been none. He said quickly: "Is that you, Mordaunt? I want you in my room. Now, please."

For a second I thought Jim was going to brave all and close with Erpingham, but I shut the door on him. Then his footsteps followed slowly after Crosse's. I turned to Dick. His anger had gone, and instead there was an immense pity in his face for me, and he put out his hand. "Will you forgive me, Frank?" I said a word or two, the bitterest I could find, and went into my room, feeling deathly sick, sick of myself, of Mordaunt, of Erpingham.

Just on "lights out" Dick came into my room. He was quiet, solemn, and almost scared-looking. "Frank, old man," he said, "say you forgive me. You did the kindest thing in all the world for me when you came in. You have been my friend from my first day here; you stood my friend this afternoon when you were sick at the very sight of me, but though I knocked you down for it like a mad dog, you were most my friend when you came in an hour ago. You don't know what this means to me."

"All right, Dick," I said hastily, moved more than I can say by his tone. "Don't say anything more, please. I was an ass to come in just as I did." And then, wearily, "Good-night, old man."

One more visitor did I have that night—Bill Kent. He came in unceremoniously, and I hardly recognised the suave, lazy Kent, drawling jests over yesterday's tea-table, in this white venomous fellow, squaring up to me.

"Know what's going to happen to Jim, Firmin?" he demanded fiercely.

"No," said I, though in my heart I knew well enough.

"Ah! we'll hear to-morrow, no doubt. Know I was at Epsom, too?"

"I told you so, didn't I?" And I added,

sweetly, "I wish Erpingham had seen you instead of Jim."

Kent took no notice of my sneer. "And that the school 'll chase your Erpingham till he drops, eh?"

I said nothing, since there was nothing to say.

"Why did he come here, Firmin?"

"To know you, Bill, perhaps."

"From where, Firmin, we'll want to know, and why."

"Why don't you go and ask him yourself?"

"He'd probably give *me* a black eye . . . and, well, all that in good time, Toothpick. Meanwhile, where and why?"

And Bill Kent went on the word.

(To be continued.)

OCTOBER CELEBRITIES.

By Readers of "The Captain."

Edward VI.

Edward VI. was the son of Henry VIII., and his third wife, Jane Seymour. He was born on October 12, 1537, and his mother died twelve days later. Until six years old he was brought up amongst women, but he was then given over to tutors, who taught him many accomplishments.

Edward was very delicate, but so patient that everybody loved him. He was greatly attached to his half-sister, Elizabeth, and wrote many affectionate letters to her.

When Edward was ten years of age his father died, and he ascended the throne. He was a zealous Protestant, and had enthusiastic advisers. The Duke of Somerset was proclaimed Lord Protector, with a council to assist him. Somerset soon marched into Scotland with an army, for the King of Scotland had promised his daughter Mary in marriage to Edward, but the Roman Catholic party in Scotland was large, and Cardinal Beaton, the head of that religion, refusing to give Mary up to a Protestant king, betrothed her to the Dauphin of France. Somerset defeated the Scotch at Pinkie, but was unable to follow up the victory, as he was compelled to return to England. The Duke of Northumberland had brought a charge against him, saying that he had kept the money taken from the monasteries, &c., for himself. The king, who did anything his advisers wanted, signed Somerset's death-warrant, and he was executed on Tower Hill, January 22, 1552. Northumberland was now really the head of England. His first act was to marry his son, Lord Guildford Dudley, to Lady Jane Grey, the king's cousin. Only three people stood between Lady Jane and the throne, Mary, Edward's elder sister; Elizabeth, his younger, and Mary Queen of Scots, who was descended from Henry VII. by an elder child than Jane. The first two persons Parliament had declared illegitimate, and Northumberland thought it very likely that his daughter-in-law would become queen.

Edward was now fast dying; he had never been strong, and it was believed that Northumberland slowly poisoned him. Northumberland

KING EDWARD VI.
From an engraving. Rischgitz Collection.

persuaded the boy king to make a will leaving the crown to Lady Jane Grey, of whom he was fond. On July 6, 1553, Edward VI. died, in the seventh year of his reign. He was gentle and retiring, clever, yet not strong enough for his position.

MARJORIE NOEL HOW.

Henry III.

OF the many kings who have ruled over what is now our glorious kingdom of England, several have been unsuited for the post. Few of these, happily, have been less suited than was King Henry III. He was the son of the most despicable of all kings, John Lackland, but, be it said to his credit, in a moral sense he was his father's antithesis. The only point of similarity between them was the poorness of their rule. Henry was the counterpart of Edward the Confessor—a good, pious man, more fitted to be Pope than king.

At the time when Henry ascended the throne, England was particularly in need of a firm ruler. As Henry was not this sort of man, he lost the sympathy of his subjects. The king had been educated on the Continent, and was highly cultured and refined. He and his people had no tastes in common, and craving for kindred spirits he imported learned foreigners.

KING HENRY III.
From an old print. Rischgitz Collection.

This proved fatal to the peace of his reign, and led to a great amount of petty squabbling between his nobles and himself, in which he was worsted. Henry was not a man of vices, like his father, but he was wanting in all the qualities of a great ruler. He was weak and easily led, instead of being strong enough to lead others. He was a slave to his relations, and to the Pope. Henry died in 1272, having reigned for fifty-six years.

BERNARD WEAVER.

President Roosevelt.

ASSUREDLY it would be a matter of no little injustice for those of us who possess a feeling of reverential respect and admiration for great men and their inevitable shadows—big deeds—to allow the month of October to pass by without paying some tribute, whether purely emotional, or whether expressed in writing it matters not, to one of the world's greatest statesmen—the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, who was born on the 27th of the month.

A sketch of Roosevelt's life will suffice to point out how strong persistency and firm resolution, when supported by ability and intellect, must, sooner or later, bring universal esteem to the man who devotes all his energies to the welfare of a nation.

Theodore Roosevelt received a liberal education, and, upon graduating from Harvard University, he for a short while studied law. Legal matters, however, afforded at that period little attraction for him; they merely served to quicken the development of his tastes for literature and politics, both of which he possessed in a marked degree.

On becoming a member of the State Legislature he exhibited such tireless energy, frank honesty and bold fearlessness that he soon gained a strong footing in his party and in public estimation. He sustained, nevertheless, a somewhat crushing defeat in a mayoral election, and during the next three years he devoted his energies to literature and to the pursuits and enjoyments of ranche life and hunting in the "Wild West."

The next six years saw him directing a keen attention to civil reforms, and in the year

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT.
Photo. Rookwood.

1895 he was nominated a Police Commissioner of New York City. The far-sighted administrative ability with which he performed the duties of this office thoroughly justified his previous reputation. Whilst acting in this capacity it was Roosevelt's forethought and skilful organisation that led up to the series of brilliant victories in the waters of Cuba and the Philippines, and it was his ambition to take a more active part in warfare which induced him, though with reluctance, to resign his post.

He now planned and with exemplary determination brought about the formation of a volunteer regiment popularly known as the "Rough Riders." His previous successes and extensive influence resulted in the welding together of a varied assortment of characters, and in his ranks could be found athletes and cowboys, politicians and policemen. With these troops, now thoroughly well drilled, he took part in the campaign which brought down Santiago, and for conspicuous bravery Roosevelt was promoted to a colonelcy.

Possessor now of the tremendous influence to be won by military achievement, together with governing efficiency, his future position was assured. In 1898 he was elected Governor of New York State, and in 1900 he was made Vice-President of the Republic, though strongly against his own inclinations and feelings. On Mr. McKinley's assassination in the following year, his highest ambition was gratified, and he became President. Since then his tactful authority and governing ability have shown themselves repeatedly, and it is to be remembered to his lasting honour that it was his well-timed and delicate interposition between Japan and Russia that directly influenced the amicable settlements between these powers, which were embodied in the Treaty of Portsmouth.

Mr. Roosevelt's life is reflected to a large extent in his own writings. His close study and observation of frontier-life resulted in numerous volumes descriptive of hunting and ranching. His political experiences brought forth also many books and articles. Of these the predominating feature is his repeated testimony to the value of never-flagging energy and strenuous effort—the author's own chief characteristics.

We cannot all be President Roosevelts; but it would be difficult to name any one who could afford a better example for emulation.

P. EUSTACE PETTER.

Lord Palmerston.

LORD PALMERSTON was born on October 20, 1784. He received his early education at Harrow, whence he was sent to Edinburgh, and then to Cambridge.

When he entered public life Toryism was in the ascendant, and his adoption of these principles at once made him popular. In 1809 he was appointed Secretary for War, and held office for nineteen years, during which time he rendered yeoman service to his country.

Prior to 1820, reform was the dream of a few isolated statesmen, but in that year Palmerston

THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT PALMERSTON.
From an engraving. Rischgitz Collection.

saw that the people were in earnest for an amendment of their representation, and he voted for it; this vote necessitated his retirement from the Ministry. On the formation of a Liberal Ministry by Earl Grey, he was made Foreign Secretary. It was in this capacity that he first earned a reputation and was enabled to display his brilliant abilities. He vigorously upheld the rights of British subjects abroad, and his policy was directed towards the extension of British influence.

From 1841–1846 he was not in office. When

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.
From an engraving. Rischgitz Collection.

he returned in 1846 he interfered successfully on behalf of the Swiss Protestants, but was thwarted when he intervened in Sicily's interests.

He was Prime Minister from 1855–1858, and again from 1859–1865, but his policy was one of pure inaction.

His most important achievements were: the establishment, in 1831, of Belgium as an independent kingdom under a Constitutional monarch; the formation, in 1834, of the Quadruple Alliance, by which England, France, Spain, and Portugal provided for the independence of the Peninsula; the war in Syria, which baffled the ambitious designs of Russia; and the attack upon Greece in the famous Pacific affair, which, as a measure of national politics, was neither ill-timed nor ill-planned.

His greatest speech was one of five hours' duration—an extraordinary effort of oratorical skill—in which he defended every step of his career when a vote of censure—which was defeated—was moved in the House of Commons.

Different opinions prevail as to his political capabilities, but, at all events, he was a "Britisher," plentifully endowed with pluck, endurance, and vigorous sense, and his death, in 1865, was a national calamity.

His nickname was "Old Pam."

T. W. SPIKIN.

Coleridge.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE was born at Ottery St. Mary in Devonshire on October 21, 1772. He was educated at Christ's Hospital and at Jesus College, Cambridge, which he left to become a trooper of dragoons under the assumed name of Comberback, and whither, on being found by his friends, he returned. He finally left Cambridge in 1794, and, in the following year, married Sarah Fricker, of Bristol. He now became associated with Wordsworth, and together they produced the "Lyrical Ballads," the publication of which forms a landmark in the history of English poetry. Coleridge's principal contribution to this work was "The Ancient Mariner." About this time also he wrote the two poems upon which his fame as a poet chiefly rests, to wit, "Kubla Khan" and "Christabel," of which the former was a dream. Of his other poems the chief are "Love," "Dejection," and "France."

Besides being a poet, Coleridge was a critic and a philosopher. His "Lectures on Shakespeare" are still the best of their kind, and his translation of Schiller's "Wallenstein" "seems," says one critic, "a much greater thing than Schiller's own work."

Coleridge was not a very prolific writer, and, moreover, a great proportion of his work was not of very great value. This may, no doubt, be attributed to the fact that he contracted the habit of taking opium, which must have dulled his energies. But Coleridge's importance in English literature must not be judged by his works, but by the influence he had on the writers of his time, for even Hazlitt, a most conceited man, confessed that Coleridge was the only man that taught him anything. He was the leader of the Romantic movement, and, chiefly through Scott and Byron, had a great influence on the poetry of Europe.

He died on July 25, 1834, after a very long illness. W. J. PERROTT.

Sir William Butler.

SIR WILLIAM FRANCIS BUTLER was born in the County of Tipperary on October 31, 1837. Of a restless and ambitious turn of mind, it was not surprising that he chose the Army as his profession. In 1858 he was appointed to the 69th Regiment. Known by his superiors as a smart and intelligent officer, it was not until 1869 that he had a chance of showing his grit. This chance came in the form of an insurrection, headed by a French half-breed named Louis Riel, of the Canadian settlers of the Red River Territory. Captain Butler took a prominent part in the expedition despatched to quell the rising. In the capacity of Special Commissioner he travelled 3000 miles, encountering many adventures, and overcoming great difficulties *en route*, and won deserved distinction for his tactful dealings with the settlers. Butler next saw active service in Ashanti (1873–1874), on the staff of Sir Garnet Wolseley. Here his soldierly qualities came prominently into view, and he was several times mentioned in despatches. So pleased was Sir Garnet with his conduct that in the following year Butler was selected by General Wolseley as his special service officer in South Africa. The Zulu rising followed, and as a result of the splendid administrative services which our hero performed during this sanguinary war, he was appointed Quarter-master-General at Durban. His next campaign was in Egypt, where, after having fought at Mabula and Kassassin, he took a prominent part in the famous battle fought at Tel-el-Kebir. No one more than Butler regretted that the gallant Gordon was left to his fate at Khartoum. After the Battle of Giniss, in which he took part, he was described in despatches as "an officer whose clear head, cool judgment, and quick intelligence qualify him for high command." This was his last fight, and he was then given the K.C.B. and promoted to Major-General. Of late years he has held a command at Aldershot, and for his splendid work there has received the Distinguished Service Order. It is now common knowledge that had Sir William's advice in connection with the late South African War been taken, instead of abused, the earlier stages of the Natal campaign would probably have not been so disastrous to the British cause. General Butler not only ranks as a great soldier, but he has also found time to write books, and splendid books they are, having to do mostly with his dealings with the Canadian Indians. HAROLD JONES.

"Father Matthew."

FATHER MATTHEW was born on October 10, 1790, at Thomastown, Tipperary. He was one of the most successful apostles of temperance Ireland ever knew. He was a relation of the Earls of Llandaff. Father Matthew was ordained a priest in 1814, and in the same year he was appointed to a missionary charge in Cork. His eager whole-heartedness won him the enthusiastic support of both rich and poor.

"FATHER MATTHEW."
From an engraving. Risehgitz Collection.

He founded a benevolent society for the needy and destitute. In a few months he had converted some 150,000 to total abstinence in Cork alone. But he was determined to do more for the cause of temperance, so he started on a tour through the Western Division of Ireland, where he converted many more to temperance principles. Not yet content, he started on a tour through Ulster, where he was as successful as on his last tour. At one town he visited, the Orange band met him, and played him into the town. To every individual who took the pledge he gave a medal, sometimes of silver,

PRESIDENT KRÜGER.
Photo. Boyer.

sometimes of bronze. A distillery belonging to his family was closed owing to the decrease in the demand for whiskey. His services were at last recognised by the State, which granted him a pension of £300 from the civil list. He died on December 8, 1856, a true ornament to the Catholic Church.

ROGNOALD LEARMOUTH.

[A creditable effort by a Class III. competitor, aged ten.—O.F.]

President Krüger.

STEPHANUS JOHANNES PAULUS KRÜGER, formerly President of the Transvaal Republic, was born at Colesberg, Cape Colony, October 10, 1825. At the age of ten he accompanied his parents in the famous migration known as the "Great Trek" to the territories north of the Orange River. His life was one of adventure, while his education was of a primitive character.

At seventeen years of age he found himself Assistant Field Cornet, at twenty Field Cornet, and seven years afterwards he ranked as Commandant in a native expedition.

For twenty years after this time the condition of the country was one bordering on anarchy, and into the faction strife which was continually raging Krüger freely entered.

In 1857 he joined Pretorius in a movement for abolishing district government in the Transvaal.

He was a prominent member in the faction that brought about that *impasse* in the government of the country which terminated in the annexation by the British in 1877.

After this he accepted paid office under the British Government, but continued, however, so openly to agitate for the retrocession of the country, that he was dismissed from that service.

In 1881 the Boer rebellion occurred, and Kruger was one of the famous triumvirate which, after Majuba, negotiated the terms of peace.

Four times he was elected President of the Transvaal—the first time in 1883, and the last time in 1894.

All his energies were centred on his intrigues for obtaining a complete independence of Britain. He made a treaty which bound all the Boer Republics to assist each other. After promising that the Uitlander grievances should be seriously considered and dealt with, he made no sign of keeping that promise. He met Sir Alfred Milner at Bloemfontein in no mood for concession. Every British proposition was met by the objection that it threatened the independence of the Transvaal. In October 1899, war with Great Britain was ushered in by an ultimatum from the Transvaal. Immediately afterwards Natal and Cape Colony were invaded by the Boers of the Transvaal and the Free State.

The war that followed is a matter of history. Bloemfontein and Pretoria having been occupied by British troops, Krüger fled the country, and endeavoured to persuade the European Powers to intervene on his behalf, but without success.

His death occurred in July 1904.

EMILY MILLER.

Lord Hugh Cecil (born October 14, 1869).

NOWADAYS, when one so often hears the melancholy plaint that the old, independent Member of Parliament is fast becoming a thing of the past, it is pleasant to be able to point to one or two worthy upholders of that hardy independence of political opinion of which there is happily a little left, even in these degenerate days. There is possibly much to admire in the zealous and slavish loyalty to his Party which prompts a man to sacrifice everything that he may record his vote with his leaders, but one is apt to lose respect for this man, and to regard him merely as one of the small, insignificant parts which go to make up the great Party machine. But as regards that small body of men who, while giving allegiance in the main to one Party or another, refuse to follow blindly wherever they are led, without so much as a thought for their own opinions on the matter; men who, having the courage of their own convictions, are not afraid to look

their leader in the face, and act in accordance with the dictates of their conscience, for these men, I say, we can surely have nothing but the highest admiration and respect.

And one of the most distinguished of this latter group in Parliament to-day is Lord Hugh Cecil. The illustrious name he bears would alone have been sufficient, at the outset of his political career, at any rate, to have gained for him a courteous hearing in the House of Commons; but one must look deeper for the reason of the great respect and attention with which his utterances are universally favoured. His earnestness, his sincerity, his broad-mindedness, combined with the fact that he is an orator of the first order—these are some of the factors of his success. Lord Hugh Cecil is one of the most promising of the younger members of the Conservative Party, and this worthy scion of a great family may assuredly look forward to a future in which nothing is unattainable, a future worthy of the ancient and illustrious House of Cecil.

G. B. HINDMARSH.

Bird Anatomy.—"Mater" (Wakefield) has searched without success in many natural histories in her endeavour to ascertain if birds are provided with lachrymal glands—the gland which supplies tears, but whose more important office it is to keep the eye itself constantly bathed and free from dust. Having failed in these quarters she naturally turns to THE CAPTAIN for assistance, and I am glad that in this matter she has not to appeal for information in vain. Birds have certainly got lachrymal glands, though they are comparatively small in proportion to another gland (Harder's) connected with the nictitating membrane or third eyelid. "Mater" asks whether the lachrymal gland in birds may not be stimulated by pain to extra secretion, as in man. I have never observed this experimentally, but should suppose from analogy that it would be so. Glad to learn that "Mater's" son and other members of the family find so much of interest in THE CAPTAIN. It is suitable for all ages. *My* family scarcely permit me to peep into the pages of the copy the "O. F." graciously sends me, until it is several days old.

Pansies.—"Cap" (Blundellsands) wishes to know what is the best culture for Pansies, what are "the best fancy breeds," and where to obtain them. Pansies are among the simplest to grow of all garden flowers, and give the most pleasing results. They send out many recumbent shoots from the crown of the roots, and some of these, if taken off and inserted in sandy soil, readily root. They are not particular as to soil, provided the situation be neither very wet nor very dry; but the best compost for them is fibrous loam with the addition of thoroughly rotted cow manure and road-sweepings. There are so many different strains of splendid character that what is the best of them is largely a matter of individual taste. If all growers were at all agreed as to which half a dozen sorts were the best, only those would be grown; but every nurseryman's catalogue contains a long list. A local florist would probably have in stock those that thrive best in "Cap's" district, and these will be "the best" for him. He will be able then to see them in flower and exercise his own taste in selection. He may also grow them from seed, but as there is a good deal of uncertainty as to the sorts he will get from seed, I should advise him to start with grown plants, and to propagate from these by cuttings. Sorry "Cap" did not write soon enough for an earlier reply.

South African Locusts.—Wm. Manson (King William's Town, Cape Colony) sends me some additional particulars concerning what he

MIGRATORY LOCUST.

calls "butterflies in khaki"—the locusts of which we published a couple of photographs a few months ago. He says: "They are from 2 to 2½ inches in length when full grown, and in several cases have been known to delay trains for several hours by settling on the metals. They have been known to clear a field of several hundred acres of every vestige of crops in a few hours. The natives collect the locusts and dry them in the sun for eating purposes." Then R. Smith (Berea, Johannesburg) has the kindness to send me an actual specimen of the insect, which proves to be the common Migratory Locust (*Locusta peregrina*), which is so great a scourge in many Eastern countries, and even on the Continent of Europe at times. R. S. tells me: "Their usual size is about 2 inches long. They may often be seen in the distance, their wings sparkling in the sunlight like silver. The locusts you illustrated must have been small [young] ones, as this one is by no means overgrown. I hope this specimen will be of use to you." Yes, I am much obliged to R. S. for sending it, and I have had a life-size drawing made of it that my readers may judge of the pleasantness of having millions of such insects swarming around and destroying everything that is eatable. I need not enter into any statement of the ravages of this insect, for I am sure that every reader of THE CAPTAIN has read much about it in his earliest schoolbooks. It may not be so generally known that a few living specimens turn up in this country from time to time, but they never become a nuisance here because our climate is not sufficiently genial for them to settle down and multiply. Think of this fact when you hear people running our climate down as the worst in the world. If we miss some of the advantages of other regions, we also escape some of their great disadvantages, so that in the long run we appear to be at least as well off as other nations. "Tommy" (Barkly East, Cape Colony) also sends me a letter in which he says: "Your snap-shots of locusts in the June number of THE CAPTAIN interested me very much. They are very common out here, and are generally known as "voet-gangers" (foot-goers), the name being derived from the fact that they have (as yet) no wings, and consequently hop along. They are about half an inch in length (sometimes rather less) and are red and black in colour. The photos give the reader but a very vague idea of the numbers in which these little pests appear, as it is no uncommon thing to see them crowded against a wall to a depth of three feet or more! When entering a town they very much resemble an approaching army, which fact has earned for them the name of *rooi-baaitjes* (red-jackets). The amount of damage done by them is enormous, and I have seen a field of lucerne completely demolished by them in less than half an hour. In spite of their smallness they hop from 2 to 2½ feet at a time and cover a very considerable distance in a day. The general mode of destroying them is by spraying them with a mixture of soap and hot water."

Butterwort.—H. Page (Woodside) asks if I can tell him of a locality in Kent or Surrey where he can obtain the common Butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*), one of the insectivorous plants. I am sorry I cannot, for the good reason that it does not grow in these counties, and is exceedingly rare in the south. Years ago it was said to grow in Petz Wood, near Chiselhurst, but the wood has long been enclosed. I had the pleasure of seeing it recently in North Wales, where it really is the *Common* Butterwort, its large pale leaves studded with dead flies, and its large violet flowers conspicuous all over the mountain sides. If H. P. could extend his collecting to the New Forest, he would find the smaller species (*P. lusitanica*) plentiful in the bogs there. The leaves of all the species exude a greasy fluid to which small insects stick. They are then digested on the surface of the leaf, and the nutritive matter is afterwards absorbed by the cells of the leaf, so that the plant thrives upon its visitors.

COMMON BUTTERWORT.

No. 1.—DOBSON'S LUCK.

By T. S. GURR.

Illustrated by George Soper.

I.

CORPORAL DOBSON, of the Royal Middlesex, during his seven years' service in India, had entertained but one ambition and desire. This was not to return immediately to England as most time-expired men do, to look back upon their sojourn in the East as a hideous dream, but to obtain his discharge in the country and join the railway service in the locomotive department. He had given the matter much profound thought, and hard thinking had only confirmed his original idea—that Nature had designed him for the foot-plate just as she had designed birds to fly. Consequently, when he was declared free of obligations to her Majesty, except in the passive capacity of a reservist, he obtained a character from his colonel, a recommendation from the Regimental Chaplain, and hurried down post-haste to negotiate Mr. Conger, the General Traffic Manager of the Great Southern Railway.

Although Mr. Conger did not supervise the Loco. Department, he was a man of great influence and second in rank in the service. It was to him that most soldiers appealed when searching for civil employment. He was known from Peshawar to Cape Comorin as a religious man, whose pet scheme of philanthropy was to reform the British army in India, and to win it from its traditional savagery and paganism to docility and other virtues. His scope being small, and the restrictions great while his subjects served with the colours, he endeavoured to compensate himself by filling his department with ex-soldiers and reservists, who would thus come directly under his benign influence. His weekly Bible classes were historic, and were, in most cases, attended by men who either solicited his favours or strove to retain them. There was no other reputed way of approaching his goodness of heart.

His fame had not escaped Dobson's ears, and even this worthy had resolved to conform to the elementary conditions which preceded the getting of a good job. For one whole month he was seen at every meeting, sitting in a conspicuous place in the front row of benches. His Amens and interjections were the most sonorous and impressive—full of the fervour which comes of true and lasting repentance. At the end of his probation, he stood up among the converted, was rewarded with a special interview and an invitation to the railway offices, and two days later was hurried up to Chotapur a full-fledged stoker. Extra hands were being engaged at the time, the railway just then having to cope with the tremendous traffic resulting from the Madras famine.

No district could have suited Dobson better than the hundred miles or so which embraced the daily run of trains proceeding northwards from Chotapur. The railway ran through country with which he could lay claim to being well acquainted. The closing months of his military career had been spent in incessant forced marches with his company in chase of the notorious Bheel dacoit chief, Tantia Topee, or, as he was better known, Tantia Bheel. History has accorded this wild and nomadic tribe a predatory genius, which severely taxed

the energy of Government to keep it in check. Under Tantia their depredations had become a matter which necessitated the employment of a considerable military force as well as the usual body of Mofussil police.

Tantia's deeds of daring, his hair-breadth escapes, and his absolute fearlessness had gained him a reputation amongst the simple peasantry such as Robin Hood once held in England. His exploits were embodied in story and song. He was credited with possessing a charmed life, and his cunning in baffling his pursuers, and frequently turning the tables upon his would-be captors, gave occasion for numerous anecdotes keenly relished by the village folk, who forgot their own losses in laughing at Tantia's methods of flouting the power of the British Raj.

A FIGURE PAINTED IN DIVERS HUES WAS FOUND HIDING.

Tantia had styled himself "Protector of the Poor," and avowed that he preyed upon the rich to benefit the indigent. To this policy he adhered when big game was within easy reach, but when business was bad he looted indiscriminately from all and sundry. His followers were the very cream of desperadoes, who could shoot well, kill a man at a stroke, or wield effectively the deadly noose. Big, muscular men, very dark and almost nude, they oiled their bodies to elude the detaining grip in the night attack, and fought mercilessly, giving and expecting no quarter. Moving rapidly over familiar country with no impedimenta to speak of, it was a difficult task to bring them to bay. They enjoyed the leadership of a man who was a master of ruse and stratagem, who avoided a trap by setting another, and never gave a spy or traitor a second chance. So terrible had he become that friend and victim alike vied in giving him shelter and promoting his plans. In short, Tantia was held in a respect which fell little short of deification.

When Dobson arrived in Chotapur, Tantia was in the very height of his glory, and had just added another feat to his list of funny exploits. Doubling on the column that was supposed to have cornered him, he looted a village just fifteen miles out of Chotapur. The military being a full thirty miles away on a wrong scent, Cummings, the Assistant Loco. Superintendent, an enthusiastic captain of the local corps of railway volunteers, promptly collected a small force and proceeded on an ambitious expedition to shatter the dacoit band. For eight hours his company tramped swiftly through the parched, rough jungle, momentarily expecting to meet the wary Tantia. At night-fall they encamped, disappointed and exhausted. When day broke, the force mustered to resume the chase, but found to their dismay that their officer was missing. The affair was a complete mystery. Sentries had been posted all night, and a regular watch kept in the camp. As no traces of Cummings could be found, the force returned homewards. Six hours after their arrival at Chotapur, a dreadful naked figure, painted in divers hues and designs, was found hiding in a water-course a mile from the railway lines. It was Cummings; and no man to this day dares speak of Tantia Bheel in his presence.

Dobson found life in a railway station very quiet after his many latter-day adventures, although it was preferable to the dull routine of barrack-room life. In small up-country stations a man turns to his work to afford him food for thought and matter for excitement. Dobson had more than enough to occupy his attention for the first few weeks in learning the intricacies of his new profession. A novice at the shovel finds it easier to throw the coal all over the foot-plate than into the fire-

hole, and learns that sharp curves and fast running do not lessen the difficulties. But Dobson applied himself to his duties with a zeal that soon ensured success. In a month's time he was not only able to perform his work satisfactorily, but had already begun to criticise the running and steaming qualities of the different classes of locos. Traffic grew busier every day, the intervals between trips shorter, and the hours on the road longer. The running staff was piling on overtime, and Dobson was happy.

"This is a fine payin' job," said Dobson to his mate one evening, as he stood polishing the regulator of one of Kitson's "heavy goods" a few minutes before the eight o'clock train left Madgi on its return journey to Chotapur. "Here's Wednesday, and I've already put in twelve hours overtime. It's a fortune I'll be makin' presently."

Bob Riley, the driver, a covenanted hand from the Great Western, was sitting with his legs dangling outside over the cab panel, estimating with parsimonious exactness his share of the expense of the new chapel that was being erected in Chotapur.

"Money's not everything," he grunted, turning his small, wizened face, broken into a hundred lines, and rough with the stubble of a week's growth. "It's rest we're wanting, not overtime. It's a job keeping your eyes open these days."

"It's the usual thing in the busy season, I'm told," replied Dobson, as he energetically polished the gauge-glass lamp. "Thank goodness, I'm still fresh."

Riley put his feet hastily through the cab window, and laid one hand on the regulator. "I saw some one bob past the front brake-van just now. I believe it's the Super. Put another shovelful on and open that injector."

A hand clutched the cab stanchion and a face drew itself into the light. "Is that you, Riley?" asked Cummings, peering into the driver's face.

"Yes, sir," replied Riley. "We'll be making a start in five minutes."

"I've got a few instructions to give before you go," said Cummings, with his usual haughty brusqueness. "We've had the eight and nine Down both looted by Bheels on the Padli bank. Peabody lost two uncovered truckloads of grain, and Brown, who followed, had five partially emptied. I'm not satisfied with either of the drivers' reports. I've heard that Peabody holds views about starving niggers which don't make dividends for the company, and I'm inclined to think that both he and Brown stopped their trains. This whimpering kind of sentiment won't do for me. I'll make an example of the next offender!"

Riley opened the fire-box door a little, and a shaft of light flashed into the darkness. "It's a job keeping a train going up that bank with forty full waggons behind you," he said.

"It's been done before," snapped Cummings. "Dobson, keep plenty of steam. Half the failures are due to you scoundrelly firemen nodding over your work! Remember you're a new hand!"

Dobson turned his hard, inscrutable face round so that he could give his superior a good square look.

"I'm no lover of Bheels," he said with much warmth. "You oughter know that. The thievin' wagabones could all starve in a heap so far as I'm concerned."

"There's the guard's signal to start," interjected Riley, turning the whistle. Cummings jumped down without another word, and crunched along the ballast on his way back to the station as the train moved off.

Very little conversation ensued between Dobson and Riley for the next few hours. There was an unusually heavy load behind, and Riley was preoccupied with Cummings' parting remarks and his own fears that the load would certainly overtax the pulling powers of his fine new Kitson when they came to the ascent of the steep Padli.

The night was dark but starry, and after eleven a waning moon threw a lurid, undecided light on the rough, broken country through which the engine puffed and panted. From the top of the summit, however, the train rolled easily for the next fifteen miles, rumbling over culverts and clanking over bridges under which, like unburnished silver, gleamed patches of the river which a hot sun had parched into bleak rock and small stagnant pools. Down below, the mugger turned his scaly head, and, half startled by the thunderous roar, lazily waddled into his refuge of slime and mud, and the sand-piper and peewit fled from the shallows into aerial safety. Now and again a jackal or fox broke cover and dashed across the track, or a herd of cattle, peacefully chewing the cud near the wire boundary fence, scattered madly when the long, piercing shriek called for the distant signal of some through station to be lowered to let the train pass on.

Upon the foot-plate, in the red glare, Dobson, with sleeves rolled up and bared throat, shovelled coal into the fire-box's greedy maw. Outside, below the embankment, the thorny babul, graceful peepul and feathery tamarisk soughed

and hissed as the train whizzed past, disregarding their stately bowings and the efforts of the tender branches to make it stay its career and enjoy with them the glamour of the witching night. On they sped, round curves, through cuttings; sometimes seeing the horizon resting low, then watching it perched high on some outlying part of the rugged and majestic Satpoora Range. Still on, scarcely slackening speed, through small wayside stations, where some lazy porter yawned and waved the green light, while the babu station-master lolled back with his feet on the telegraph operating board, and slept the short uneasy sleep of the conscience-stricken.

Now the rugged, uncultivated waste gave place to smooth green fields and snug villages, hemmed round with thick loopholed mud walls, for in the distance, grotesquely set in a rich, endless-looking plain like a huge battlemented monument, towered Ankai, the steep, inaccessible stronghold of the old-time Pindari hordes. Hour after hour the train rolled along without a stop until Vali was reached, at the base of the Padli summit, where the home signal was placed against them. Riley, with an impatient snort, pulled up, and the safety-valve lifted with a crack and deadened all other sounds with its mighty roar. "Why did that fool of a station-master stop us here just when I'd got a swing on? We'll stick on the top now, as sure as a gun!" he said with his teeth clenched.

"Here," he bellowed out as the guard and station-master came up, "why in thunder have you stopped us?"

"I stopped you to warn you about Bheels," said the fat babu in his "pidgin" English, with the air of a disaster-averting hero. "Not content with robbing villages, the audacious scoundrels are commencing to rob trains. Mr Peabody and old Brown both got trains robbed up here. Tantia is in the neighbourhood as well, I know, so I thought I would advise."

"How do you expect me to get over now," shouted Riley, "when you've crippled my speed at the foot of the bank? Start us at once, you idiot! I know all about the Bheels."

The babu looked hurt, aggrieved.

"You may resume journey," he said, "but I must tell you I had to telegraph for military this——" The rest was lost in a confusion of tightening couplings and creaking wheels.

"Now for it!" said Dobson, his face aglow with excitement as he took a nip from his tea bottle. "Here's to Tantia and a little fun!"

He collected a small heap of coal lumps, and placed them on one side. "Ammunition,' he nodded to Riley. "There's nothing like being ready for all contingencies, as our captain used to say."

Riley gave the engine every pound of steam he could put into the cylinders. The train started slowly, and, the ascent being gradual, soon got into a swing. Dobson gave the fire constant attention, and the engine acquitted herself nobly, the steam still hissing from the safety-valve.

"We'll get her over!" he shouted exultantly. "Keep her goin'!"

Riley did not reply, but he looked troubled and very dubious. Although he was by nature despondent and pessimistic, ten years over that district had given him experience, and shaped his judgment.

Puff! Puff!—the beats began to get perceptibly slower and more laboured, and the steam, instead of escaping, stood a little below full-pressure mark. Riley looked up the track to see that the line was clear, while Dobson, in his spare moments, scanned the embankments.

"Give her more coal!" yelled Riley, "the pointer's walking back, and we're slowing down!"

He had scarcely spoken when the engine slipped. The wheels flew round and the quickening beat of the exhausting steam was merged in a confused roar.

"They've greased the rails," Riley groaned, rushing to the sander. "We haven't got a hope now!"

The wheels gripped again, and the train moved along with greatly diminished speed. Dobson worked with frantic haste, first with shovel, and then with rake and slice. Along the top of the cutting, black figures were already moving swiftly and noiselessly, and still higher up others were collected to spring on the train as it passed.

Riley saw them first. "Look at them! Look at the brutes!" he hissed, leaning forward from his seat and staring with fixed eyes and startled features into Dobson's tranquil face. "The Bheels!"

The engine slipped again, and the same instant a huge stone crashed through the light cab awning and dropped with a terrific bash and jingle at Dobson's feet.

Riley left the regulator and rushed round the side of the engine.

"We'll be murdered," he exclaimed. "Heaven have mercy on us! Dobson, for pity's sake keep her going! You're not afraid, are you?"

Dobson never winced. He moved the obstruction from the foot-plate and dropped it over the side. "It's useless for fuel, and too heavy for defence purposes," he grumbled. Catching sight of Riley, he called out: "Come here, and don't be a fool. You're safer standin' at your post than runnin' round the engine like a scalded cat."

Riley came in rather shame-facedly, but trembling visibly. "I wouldn't care," he said "if I thought Tantia was not amongst them, but if he gets his hands on us, we're doomed. Dobson," he continued in a tense whisper, "they tell me you saw Tantia once. What sort of a man was he?"

The train was moving at a crawling pace now, and in the rear dark figures had already clambered on to the trucks, and were heaving bags of wheat on to the off side of the track.

"I saw him," said Dobson, raising his voice so as to be heard distinctly, not wishing Riley to miss a single word, "I saw him at Gumti, a village away beyond those hills," pointing to a dark distant range on the right. "We were told Tantia was hidin' there, and half a company of men was told off to search every hut and likely hidin'-place. Me and Black McCaffrey, the drunkenest, awfullest, fightin' man in the whole regiment, were together, rummagin' in a hut, when we found an old, old man wrapped up in a dirty blanket, and crouched in a corner as if he was dyin'. McCaffrey immediately clutches his hair, and drags him out of the dark into the light of day, shoutin', 'It's that old 'ound, Tantia!' and the old man stopped his wailin' when he got outside, and suddenly sprung up from a decrepid wretch with white hair and silvery beard, into all the bone and black shinin' muscle of Tantia Bheel! We was both took back, McCaffrey most of all, for with one savage downward cut with his long knife, Tantia clave him down to the stomach as clean as a neatly gutted antelope. Before I could rush in, Tantia was gone!"

Riley's face was ghastly pale now, and turned his head away to hide his feelings from his callous mate. He could see the looters busy at their work, and his spirits sank, leaving him a pitiable object of deadly fear. But he noted with satisfaction that they had almost reached the top of the bank, and another minute would find them running safely down the other side.

"They're still at the job, mate," he said, "but we'll be all right in a few seconds."

Just as he had finished speaking, a volley of musketry rang out close by, and a few bullets struck the engine and brake-van. "They're firing on us now! Shall I stop, Dobson, or keep her going?"

DARK FIGURES WERE HEAVING BAGS OF WHEAT ON TO THE TRACK.

"Keep her movin'. Keep her movin'. Ah! Who's this?"

A huge, black figure had jumped on to the engine steps, and, with a bound, stood in front of them. Dobson knew him at a glance. The stalwart body, the massive but agile limbs and flexible muscles, as well as the noble look and masterful bearing, proclaimed him to be Tantia Bheel!

Dobson stood for a full minute looking at the savage, merciless intruder, too surprised, too staggered to do anything else. In the meantime, the train was rushing down the short incline, every moment adding to its greatly accelerated speed. Riley promptly rushed round to the front of the engine, leaving Dobson and Tantia face to face.

The two stood glaring at each other, until Dobson, determined to die game, sprang for the fire-shovel and savagely struck at the dacoit chief. For what followed, neither Dobson nor any one else could have been prepared. Eluding the blow, Tantia flung himself down, and, in this grovelling attitude, begged wildly for mercy.

'Don't kill me, sahib!" was his appeal; "I surrender to you, and ask you to place me under the Rani's protection. My own people have turned on me, and are seeking my blood From the Rani I can expect justice and mercy; from my own people naught but ingratitude and death. Spare me! See, I am unarmed and your prisoner. Don't stop the train and let them capture me, I beseech you. The reward is greater, I am told, to him who takes Tantia alive."

TANTIA BEGGED FOR MERCY.

Dobson thought of the reward, and his eyes twinkled. The Government offered 30,000 rupees for Tantia alive, and half that amount for his corpse. There was money, fame, a comfortable sinecure perhaps, if he handed Tantia over to the authorities. The robber chief was cowed, that was certain. From his own account, his followers had rebelled against him. Dobson had heard the volley which preceded Tantia's desperate attempt to escape from their murderous hands. The game was evidently up, and Tantia was a fallen star. Dobson was a man who was a stranger to fear, and he readily accepted the best chance of his life.

Assuming his most terrifying expression, Dobson advanced, shovel in hand, and stood over his prostrate prisoner. "I'll spare your life," he said in broken vernacular, "if you sit quiet and give no trouble. A single movement will mean death at my hands, or certain destruction under the wheels of the train if you attempt to jump off."

Tantia huddled down near the tender, lowered his head on his arms, and remained immovably statuesque. Dobson kept one eye on his work, and one on his prize. Above the roar of the train he heard Riley, from his hiding-place in front of the engine, singing a psalm in a quavering and raucous voice.

"Thirty thousand rupees at one stroke," Dobson muttered to himself; "I'd have to work and scrape for twenty-five years to get that together. What unlooked-for luck! Bill Dobson, you're goin' to be a gentleman, and every half-caste mamma in Chotapur will parade her daughter for matrimonial inspection. Like enough you'll be dancin' at your own weddin' this time six months for sure. I didn't think a black, skulkin', murderin' reprobate of a nigger could give me all that."

He was in a state of simmering excitement the rest of the journey to Chotapur. It was only an hour's run, but Dobson kept up a pace that would bring the train in twenty

minutes sooner. Tantia never moved a muscle the whole of the time, and latterly, from his steady breathing, Dobson assumed he was asleep.

Much to his disgust Dobson found the distant signal at Chotapur against him. Should he disregard it and run in? He thought circumstances justified such a course. "I'll be like Nelson," he said to himself, "and not see the bloomin' signal." So he tore on. But he found he had another factor to deal with, and that was Riley. Tantia had terrified him so far, but fear of breaking the rules, and probably courting a collision, exercised a stronger influence over him. He rushed on to the footplate, pushed Dobson aside, and closed the regulator.

"Can't you see the signal's not down, you fool?" he shouted angrily. "Do you want to be smashed up, or sacked from the service?"

"We'll lose our man, you cowardly skunk, if you stop!" Dobson replied, confronting Riley with a threatening gesture. "Hang the signal. Tantia's more important! Give me a hand to pin 'im, and open that regulator, or I'll strangle the breath out of your carcase! Leave the train to me, and go round to the front and finish your psalm. I've had to manage by myself so far. I can trust myself to do the odd mile to the station."

"While I'm on the engine I'm master!" cried Riley, with great dignity and much emphasis. "Get hold of the shovel, and leave the regulator to me!"

The train had now nearly stopped.

"Tantia sha'n't escape, though, not if I have to hand his corpse in!" yelled Dobson, mad with rage, turning round to grapple with his prisoner. But Tantia was gone—had completely vanished! And worse than that—to add piquancy to the situation—he had decamped with Dobson's coat, which had been hanging above his head.

It contained a silver watch, which Dobson had purchased just a fortnight previously for the sum of seventy-five rupees!

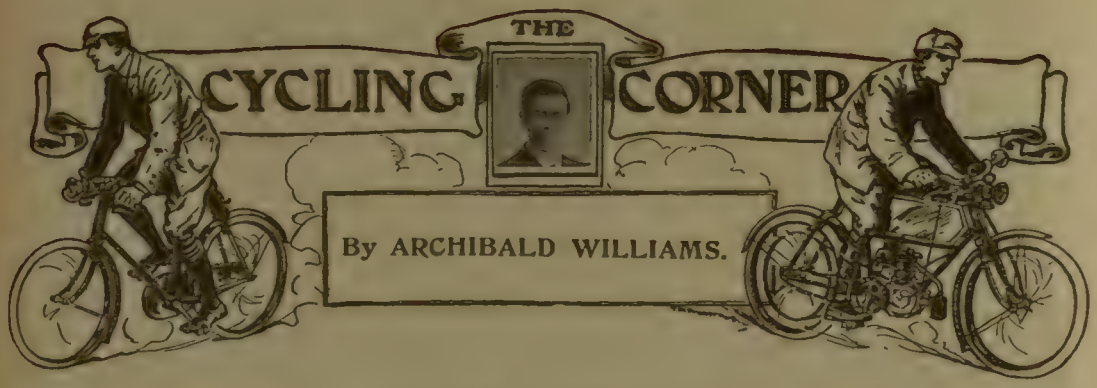
A quarter of an hour after Dobson arrived in the shed, the express ran into the station with some interesting passengers.

They were twenty men of the Middlesex, acting as an escort to fifty Bheels for the local gaol. The latter had been captured that very morning on the top of Padli bank. At such an early hour few people were about, but they all mustered on the platform to view the prisoners and hear the story of their capture. Dobson, still in his shirt-sleeves, was amongst the spectators, but he stood discreetly in the background, not wishing to be recognised by his old comrades. A burly private related the incident in brief but picturesque language.

"We 'ad 'em fairly cornered this time," he said, flushing with importance and pride. "For six hours we sat jammed in a small culvert on the top of Padli, waitin' for Tantia and his thunderin' Bheels. We'd 'eard from a prisoner that Tantia would board the train at the top, and murder the driver if he refused to stop. It was past two, and just enough moon to see an object a hundred yards or so, when we 'eard the train creepin' up. Some of us deployed to the right and some to the left of the track, to get 'em 'twixt a cross-fire. We 'ad just settled down in ambush, when who comes sneakin' up with a small band but that 'og Tantia, never dreamin' we was almost close enough to grab him! Yer cawn't mistake Tantia even in the dark. He was right in front of us and the trap was complete. As the train was close, we decided to wait till it came in front of 'im and then rush 'im. Bust me, when all was ready, if some hass didn't sneeze and give the show away! Tantia bolted in a second, but we was as quick, and cut off his retreat. There was only the train left in front of him, and Tantia made a dash to cross in front of it, and got clean under the wheels, as I'm a livin' man! We yelled to the driver to stop, but some of our blokes started to fire on the Bheels, and the driver didn't 'ear us, or thought we was Bheels. Tantia's dead for certain, though. We couldn't find 'is body near by, but the captain said he was caught up by the machinery, and would drop lower down, so 'e set off with some men to look for the remains. Poor old Tanty! 'E was a brave sort o' bloke, and I'm just dyin' to drink to 'is memory. Any one got the price of a drink?"

Dobson slunk off just then. He walked home to his comfortless quarters that morning more disgusted and exercised in mind than he had ever been since he first landed on India's unhappy shores with the new draft.

Next Month: "Tantia's Duel."



ABOUT CARRIERS.

THE utility of the cycle is greatly increased by a good carrier attachment, either behind the saddle, over the front wheel, or on the handle-bars. Of the three positions, the first is the most usually preferred for bulky parcels, though the front carrier appears to be increasing its popularity—not the carrier of the tradesman's boy which is attached to the front forks and moves with them, but the pattern which is clipped to the frame and therefore does not affect the steering. The handle-bars should be reserved for small, light articles, such as mackintosh capes. The great objection to fitting carriers there is the increased difficulty of keeping the bars nice and bright.

Fig. 1.—For carrying a wide parcel on a carrier, the straps should be passed downward through the side slots and round the rim.

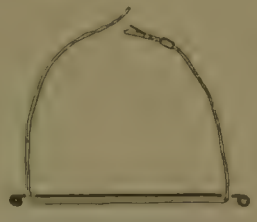


Fig. 2.—When the article is narrow the straps should pass up through the side slots. The dark circles indicate the rim wire in section.

Affixing Articles to the Carrier.

In the first place, have really *good* straps. Some straps supplied are of very poor quality, and soon give way. A harness-maker's wares can always be relied upon. Have holes *punched* in the straps nearly all the way down. It is very aggravating when the circuit cannot be reduced sufficiently to accommodate a small parcel. The straps should be long enough to go more than twice round the carrier, so that they may be fixed up neatly when there is no luggage aboard.

For a wide parcel, which tends to rock on the carrier, arrange the straps as in Fig. 1; for a narrow one as shown in Fig. 2. A parcel is often more conveniently attached if stood on one side rather than on the bottom; for the nearer its breadth is to that of the carrier the more direct and firm will be the hold of the straps.

A tapering parcel should be placed with its thicker end towards the frame (Fig. 3), so that if the straps slip there may be less likelihood of it falling off. In all cases, take care to pass at least one strap through the string of the parcel.

Short pieces of rubber tubing, slit longitudinally, make a convenient protection for frame tubes against the clips attaching the carrier. The rubber tubing should have an internal bore somewhat smaller than the tubes. A clip is placed loosely in position, the pad is opened and passed over the tube, and slipped down till between it and the clip. From time to time a twist should be given to the clip screws, to take up any compression in the rubber.

The Rolling-up of an Inner Tube

is most successfully accomplished as follows: Remove the valve stem and suck out all air. Grip the tube near the valve so that no air may pass back, and replace the valve. Lay the tube on the table or hang it over a nail and arrange it as in Fig. 4. Roll up, beginning, of course, at the end away from the valve; and when the rolling is complete, pass a rubber ring round the spiral (Fig. 5) over the free end beyond the valve. A tube thus rolled forms a small and compact object, which may easily be affixed under the saddle. The great point is to get all air out of the tube, the sides of which then press on one another to form what is practically a single ribbon of rubber.

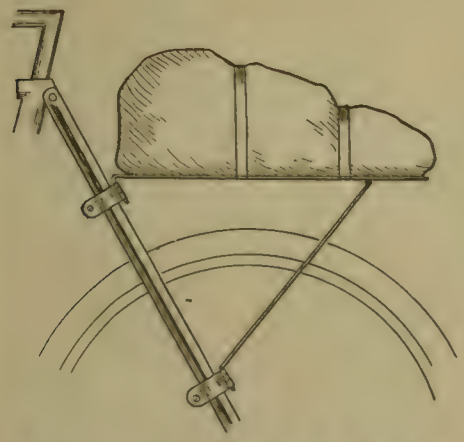


FIG. 3.—A tapering article should be placed on the carrier with the larger end towards the saddle. There is then less danger of its falling off if the strap slips.

THE OLD MACHINE.

"What's to be done with the old machine?" is a question which must vex a good many heads every year. The answer necessarily varies with circumstances—the amount of accommodation, the condition of the machine, and the needs of the rider. If the old mount has been superseded on account of serious shortcomings, I should unhesitatingly recommend its sale at any price, as it will not pay for its keep, and will probably never be used. If, on the other hand, it is simply out of date, but, being of good quality throughout, is still capable of plenty of work, one should think twice before parting with it. While your new cycle retains its original beauty you will naturally not care to expose it to rain and mud—at any rate, for short journeys; and the old jigger is at such times a useful substitute. For very dirty winter travel to and from the station or school, when one cannot clean up during the working part of the day, it is a pity to use a machine in whose condition one takes any pride. It is also very useful to have a stand-by in the event of the "first string" being laid up temporarily; for loaning to a friend staying with you (you may, of course, first offer him your new mount with a delicate inflection of voice hinting that a refusal will be appreciated); or for teaching a novice to ride on. Should the plating be in a very *passé* condition, sand-paper the parts well and give them a couple of coatings of enamel. 'Tis better to have no bright parts at all than to have a lot of rusty ones.

The adjustment of the old machine should not be neglected. Keep it in good running order, or its value is practically *nil*. The tyres will be greatly benefited by an occasional trip over (preferably) moist roads; for tyres—at any rate, as now constituted—won't stand being disused for months at a time.

TAKING THINGS TO PIECES.

While some people have a dread of even unscrewing a nut for fear that "something may go wrong," others dissemble the parts of a cycle on very little provocation and in a manner that suggests the absence of any need for ever putting them together again. So far as a cycle is concerned—or at least a well-made cycle—any person of average intelligence need not suspect lurking difficulties in displacing or replacing the various items, provided—and this is the essential point—that due heed be paid to the arrangement of things before the commencement of operations. The most complicated common job is the removal of the back wheel. We begin by standing the cycle upside down and taking off the chain. To do this the screw rivet must be extracted. I have seen people wrestling with this and wondering why the makers ever put it in so tightly—unaware of the fact that it is secured by a little nut, which has to be loosened before the screw can be turned. There is no need to remove the nut altogether preparatory to attacking the screw. Just give it half a turn and keep a finger upon it while working the screw-driver, so that it may not twist and bind the screw again. As soon as the screw tip has passed out of it, slide the nut off with finger and thumb and lay it in some receptacle where *it will be found easily*. The chain off, put the screw rivet back in its place. Then you'll know where *it* is.

FIG. 4.—To roll up an inner tube, arrange it thus: suck out the air, and replace the valve.

Before going further have a careful look at the things encircling the spindle. Next to the cones come the adjusters, the screws of which are not quite in line with the perforated plates, so that they may lie centrally in the slots of the fork ends. Then come the forks; then the ends of the mud-guard stays; then the spindle nuts. Possibly there may be a washer

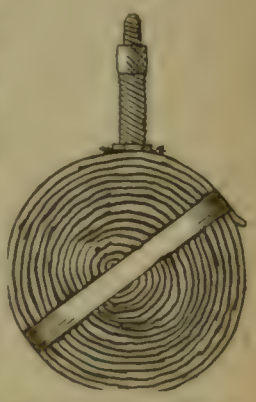


FIG. 5.—Roll up, and secure with a rubber band.

or two somewhere in the series. If there are any, carefully note their position; for it is obvious that if things work all right before you touch them they will do the same if the parts are replaced in their original positions.

After a due examination remove the spindle nuts and slide the wheel backwards a quarter of an inch. Then prise off the caps on the fork ends through which the adjusters pass. Unhitch the chain-guard stays, and the wheel is free. If the bearings require no attention, replace the nuts on the spindle to keep the adjusters from falling off. The nuts on these last should not be shifted, as their position helps in the replacement of the wheel. It is generally harder

Returning to London on Bank Holiday, August 1906. Snapped on an asphalted stretch of the Bath Road near Slough.

to put a thing back than to take it out. The adjusters are turned until the screws are in line with the slots of the fork and the spindle is slid part way in. Replace the caps of the adjusters on the fork end, and push the wheel in as far as the adjusters allow it to go. Slip the guard stays over the spindles and screw on the nuts, but not "hard down." Now for the chain. Pass it round the small chain-wheel and bring both its ends on to the large chain-wheel, so as to take all strain off the end links while the rivet is screwed in and nutted. See that the wheel is central in the forks, and, holding it so, tighten up the spindle nuts. If the wheel rattles or turns stiffly, the bearings are too loose or too tight respectively. To put this right you will require the services of the thin flat spanner usually supplied with every cycle. After loosening one nut on the spindle, this spanner is slipped over the cone (cut away to fit it), and the cone is screwed in or out as the case may be. I should have referred to the brake, which must of course be unshipped before the wheel can be extracted. With some patterns of brake the reassembling is rather troublesome; but fortunately the manufacturers are making things more convenient for the amateur.

The Golden Rules

to be generally observed when taking a cycle to pieces are:

(1) Select a spot to stand the machine on where any part that falls may easily be seen. Wherever possible spread a cloth under the cycle.

(2) Keep the parts together. Don't lay them down absent-mindedly, here, there, and everywhere.

(3) Replace nuts and screws temporarily, after each part is released. Then there will be less danger of getting them shuffled. In spite of modern automatic machinery, nuts and screws are not always quite true to gauge; and a nut which revolves on one bolt easily may be a tight fit for another, nominally of the same size.

(4) As already mentioned, look what you are doing or about to do.

(5) Go right through with the job "in once" if possible. If it promises to be a long one, allow plenty of time for it before taking it in hand.

(6) Since the handling of greasy parts is a messy business at best, don't risk good clothes.

A motor-car travelling over the same stretch at high speed. In spite of the draught there is no sign of dust to be seen. The cyclist wishes that this were the case everywhere when a motor passes.

If you rub your hands well with vaseline or lanoline beforehand they can be washed clean much more easily afterwards.

(7) When the job is finished, go over all screws and nuts carefully to make sure that they are tight. Some time ago I adjusted the steering-pillar bearings for a friend, and screwed up the bolt of the pinch-lug at the top, as I thought, quite firmly. For any other cycle with which I have had to deal the pressure I put on the spanner at this particular part would have sufficed. In the afternoon we went out for a ride, which included the coasting of two

very steep hills. At the bottom of the second my friend remarked that his handle-bar seemed a bit loose; and, on investigation, I found to my astonishment that it revolved quite easily in the pinch-lug, so that without knowing it my friend had been in imminent peril of a terrific smash on both hills. The fact was that the pinch-lug was defective, and closed without squeezing the steering-tube against the stem of the handle-bars. So I have made an additional mental mem.; when you do anything to the head of the machine, test the tightness of the handle-bars.

"A Cycle in the Making"

will, I hope, be the title of my next article. For some time past I have promised myself a visit to Coventry to look round some of the most important works there.

I may say in advance that in no branch of manufacture has the perfection of mechanical appliances been brought to a higher pitch than in the cycle-making industry. So I know that I shall have plenty of interesting things to tell you.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Acetylene."—If there is a lot of white powder in the bottom of the tin of carbide you may be certain that air has found its way in. When in good condition each lump of the chemical should be black. The admission of moisture whitens the surface and causes it to fall away, so forming the deposit of which you complain. When this is the case, stand the tin with the lid off in a hot cupboard or over a stove for a few hours.

L. Key.—The banking of cycle tracks at the corners is necessary to prevent the riders being overthrown outwards by centrifugal force, which is counteracted by the force of gravity tending to make him fall towards the inside. You may remember that the recent disastrous railway accident at Salisbury was caused by the driver taking a curve at such a speed that the train fell over outwards. If my memory serves me aright, a witness at the inquiry stated that the outer rail ought to have been more than two feet higher than the inner for a speed of seventy miles an hour to be safe at the curve, adding that, if the track had been "banked" to such an extent, a *stationary* engine would have toppled over on it.

G. H. Wells.—I should advise you to stick to 28-in. wheels. There seems to be no advantage in changing; and, as a rule, it is more easy to get 28-in. covers and tubes from local dealers. In no case "split sizes."

"Inquirer."—The "yellow deposit" on the enamel of your cycle is probably due to the perishing of an exterior coat of *varnish*. Do you keep your machine in a stable, where the air always contains a proportion of ammonia gas, highly injurious to varnish. A carriage-builder told me some time ago that he often had to repaint cars garaged in coach-houses communicating by doors with stables.

THE SONG OF THE BALL.

I AM the Autocrat of Sport—the God who governs Play!
Prince, commoner, and husbandman I hold beneath my sway.
I preach the potency of might
To prosper and defend the right;
The glory of a hard-won fight,—
The rapture of the fray.

I am the goal of Man's desire. I cast out craven fear;
They gain a glorious heritage who to my ranks adhere.
You can hear my buoyant spirit sing
As swiftly through the air I swing
To soar on strength-begotten wing,
A fleet, elusive sphere.

I lure men from their cities to follow in my train:
I chase pale-visaged care away and ease the wearied brain.
Steadfast, unerring, unto each
True skill and chivalry I teach,
Until the valiant ways they reach
Of ancient days again.

They bow before my sceptre, and to one and all I give
Such fruits of noble manhood as make men glad to live;—
Fleetness of foot and vision sure,
Unswerving patience to endure,
True-beating heart, a spirit pure,
And courage to achieve.

They are the flower of Nations who answer to my call.
See how they stand, erect, alert, unflinching comrades all.
I am their King—they serve me well!
And day by day the legions swell
Of those who own my magic spell,—
The great, all-conquering Ball.

Mabel Richards.

AT HICKSON'S.

By F. L. MORGAN.

Illustrated by ALFRED PEARSE.

THE EARTHQUAKE.

I.

WHEN any material organisation reaches the zenith of its career, popular belief declares that it shall not remain stationary on its dizzy heights, but shall thenceforth decline, or, anyhow, fluctuate. Hickson's was not exempt from the tyranny of mortal decree. After two years of unusual success, the College showed unmistakable signs of slacking, and shrank visibly within itself. More than the average number of seniors had left at Christmas—among them some of the back-bone of Hickson's—and this may have been the cause of the sudden back-sliding. However, matters were in a feeble condition when Mary Baker, a prefect and a shining light of Bowen's House, replaced Marcus Aurelius on her study book-shelf and prepared for some strenuous mental work.

Starting with Bowen's, she saw that the girls' house left much to be desired, both in school and out of it, at the present moment. It needed a strong, firm, and kindly pull-up—and that quickly. Who, then, was to operate? The Cabinet (Hickson's nominal governor) was weak, Bowen's representatives therein—of which there were three out of the seven members—being worthy and well-meaning girls, but utterly incapable. How they had got into the Cabinet was beyond Mary's mental grasp. With a sigh she dismissed them from her mind, feeling that if *she* (Mary) could by any chance get into the Cabinet, perhaps——

"Come in!"

There came in Ronald Algernon Stanborough, Englishman. He was tall and clean-limbed, with breed and nationality writ large all over him.

"Show me a dark corner where I can sit with a dropped jaw, and rest my intellect," he said, flinging his cap on to the table.

Mary Baker smiled. Singularly devoid of the quality which Americans are wont to call "vivacity," Mary was very soothing to the Britisher, who had deeply rooted objections to panic of any sort. She did not spring up, offer a fellow the best arm-chair, give him a foot-stool and ask him to tea, all inside of thirty seconds; she just stayed where she was, and looked intelligent or sympathetic as the occasion demanded.

"What's up?" she now inquired, when Stanborough had taken possession of the second-best chair.

"Up!" he repeated; "I don't know of anything very 'up' just now. It's down, my dear girl, down in the very depths."

"What is?" asked Mary Baker, with just the proper amount of sympathy in her voice.

"Why Carr's is, and Bowen's is—in fact, Hickson's is."

The girl nodded. She had been thinking the same thought five minutes previously.

"Look at the last school results—rotten!" went on Stanborough; "cast your eye over recent games records—absolutely awful. And not only that, the—the social side of the Coll. is getting so unspeakable. The kids rag one another shockin', and, as often as not, their rows end in a mixed scrap. It makes me sick."

"I know," said Mary Baker, commencing to set out tea for two. She understood better than any one else would have done, the Englishman's ultra-disgusted emphasis with regard to "mixed scraps."

"As for cricket," continued Stanborough, getting on to the sorest point, "Hickson's cricket seems to be going back to the non-existent state in which I found it when I arrived. I doubt if I shall get *one* decent eleven this year. Cricket ought to be compulsory—at least, for the fags—juniors, I mean. It educates their taste, and turns many a slip-shod little slacker into a keen, useful bat. I've slogged hard enough, but what can I do with no rules and no seniors to back me up? Old Offord, our one decent man, is in New York or somewhere, on family biz., and the Cabinet

—Great Scott!——" here words failed the indignant Britisher for an instant.

"I tell you what we want," he said, "and that's a straight school captain with a good batting average and a stout swagger-stick at his disposal. What on earth is the use of a Cabinet consisting of three mild, moth-eaten youths, three feeble-minded, half-and-half sort of girls—and old Offord in New York! Now, if *I* could get into the Cabinet, I might be able to——"

"Come in!" interrupted Mary Baker, answering a knock at the door.

A tall, thin child with brilliantly red hair fell over the mat into the room, and clutched wildly at the back of Stanborough's chair to save herself. Her length suggested fourteen or fifteen years, but her small, pale face and large, wide-open, grey eyes suggested the youngster of eleven or twelve. As a matter of fact, she was thirteen. Recovering her balance with an apologetic smile, she remarked interrogatively, "I just reckoned that perhaps you didn't know W. J. Offord's left?"

A TALL, THIN CHILD FELL OVER THE MAT.

"Left!" echoed Mary Baker. "No, who told you?"

"Oh, every one knows. There's been a telegram, and he's not coming back," replied the red-headed one, whose name was Jane Hobbs. "I thought you'd be glad if I told you, as there'll be a vacancy in the Cabinet. And you never saw such a rumpus, 'cause Carr's want the Britisher to have it, but, of course, you'll get it, Mary. I told young Harris that, much as I love the Britisher, when it comes to choosing between him and——"

"Shut up!" said Ronald Stanborough.

The silence that followed was of the kind that seems to require a well-manipulated coke-hammer to break it. Jane Hobbs sat on a corner of the table, swinging her long, black-stockinged legs, and speculating, as she eyed the dainty tea-things, on the impossibilities of being asked to make a third. She had no idea of the extreme delicacy of the present position, as evolved by the following facts:

Mary Baker and Stanborough were great friends and constant companions.

Bowen's House was in low water, and Mary Baker thought she might mend matters by getting into the Cabinet.

Carr's House was in low water, and Ronald Algernon Stanborough thought *he* might make things hum a trifle if he got into the Cabinet.

There was only *one* vacancy.

"Well," said the Britisher at length, in tones which he thought were ordinary, and pretending not to notice the tea laid for two, "I must be off."

"All right," replied Mary Baker. But it wasn't. She smiled calmly and looked him straight in the face as she spoke, but she was thinking, passionately: "I have been at the Coll. longer than Ronald, and I have worked harder. Bowen's needs a leader, and I—I *must* get into the Cabinet!"

II.

She didn't, however. It was like this.

When certain houses at a public school, on entering for a coveted place of honour, find themselves absolutely level in the matter of points, and the prefects arrive in a dead-heat as to votes, and it is deemed necessary that some

impartial judge be found to choose between them—when in this dilemma they go, as often as not, to the Headmaster. Once given, his decision—whatever the nature of it—is considered final, and the houses that do not happen to be the favoured ones grin and bear it—or perhaps they don't grin, but, at any rate, they bear it.

Thus, when the case of Ronald Algernon Stanborough of Carr's, and Mary Baker of Bowen's, was laid before the Head by Hickson's temporarily feeble staff of prefects, and the Head after due reflection unhesitatingly pronounced Stanborough to be the new Cabinet member, Bowen's should have retreated in good order. But Hickson's was degenerating, and this was not so.

The day after the Head had given his decision was fixed for a senior mixed hockey match. The first transports of delight at having won their hearts' desire being over, Carr's filtered quietly up to the field.

"It's remarkable," commented one Joseph White to the company at large, "how downright unpleasant girls can be when they're put out. *I* couldn't help the Head choosing Stanborough, and yet Isabel Uridge must nearly snub *my* head off all dinner-time. Why couldn't she have gone for the Britisher? He's hardened enough to stand it, but I'm a sensitive boy and——"

"Don't prattle," interrupted Stanborough, disagreeably.

"Turn off the British Peerage expression which is at present marring your classic features, and then I won't," retorted White. "*I* can't help it if Mary Baker won't speak to you any more, can I?"

"No, but you can try to help being such a double-distilled ass," said Stanborough hastily, for White's remark, made in ignorance and meant in the nature of a joke, was nearer the truth than sounded pleasant. Not that there had been any decided quarrel between the rival candidates for the Cabinet, but there *was* a coldness, an avoidance of meeting and speaking more than was necessary. The Head's decision in favour of Stanborough had brought things to an inharmonious crisis—and people were beginning to notice.

Glancing round the field and seeing only the followers of Carr, Joseph White said:

"Where on earth are the girls? We ought to be playing by now. Here's Flower—perhaps he'll know. Hallo, Weed," he called, "seen Bowen's hockeyites by any chance?"

Jonathan Flower, a long nondescript-looking youth of the Sixth, lazily vaulted the gate and strolled forward.

"Wal, yes," he replied when within comfortable speaking distance, "I reckon I've seen *all* Bowen's—met 'em coming out from a mass meeting. We're excommunicated," he added, looking round genially.

Nobody grasped it, so he continued:

"The ladies have given us up—thrown us over—chucked us—in fact, all is now over between us!"

Joseph White opened his mouth to ejaculate, but closed it again at the sight of the Britisher's fierce young face.

"Do you mean," asked Stanborough, addressing Jonathan, "that the girls are not coming up for the hockey match?"

"I do, sir—they're never coming up to do anything with us any more unless you resign from the Cabinet, and call another prefects' meeting. Until then we are to subside—consider ourselves ignored."

Incredulity and amusement were largely expressed on the faces round.

"Look," said Joseph White suddenly, pointing with a tragic finger, "there they go. *My land!*"

The group of seniors wheeled round and gazed as one man. It was true. A long line of unmixed girls crossing from the junior field to the tennis courts, and carrying racquets and work-baskets, proclaimed the ultimatum of Bowen's House.

"Britisher," said Joseph White solemnly, "you'll have to give up your berth in the Cabinet, or I shall pine away and die."

"I'll be hanged if I do," said the Britisher, whose lips smiled while his eyes looked angry. He turned his back on the tennis courts. "Now then, you chaps, pick up sides!"

III.

Much might be told of the days that followed, did space but permit. This week of the month of April, 1906, was unique in the annals of Hickson's College. A few of the senior girls (and Mary Baker was apparently one) remained strictly neutral, but the majority, ill-advised and wrongly led, were true to their word and would have none of Carr's. They worked and played without the co-operation of the boys, absolutely refusing all masculine aid or society.

After a few days of amused tolerance, Carr's grew angry, and peculiar comments as to the worthlessness of girls in general, and of Bowen's in particular, were borne on the already overburdened atmosphere. Finally, as there appeared no sign of peace and harmony, the boys lapsed into silence and unmixed gloom.

THE FIRST SICKENING SHOCK OF THE EARTHQUAKE BROUGHT EVERY INMATE OUT INTO THE COURTS.

Sunday afternoon, that glorious space when the girls, discarding Hickson's daily attire, were wont to undo their pig-tails and put on their prettiest frocks; when "square-toes" were consigned to outer darkness, giving place to "beaded points"; when Hickson's would ramble across the fields, in straggling twos and threes, comparing home and school notes; when the boys sought out their special chums for a quiet chat, being certain of receiving the sympathy that only girls can give—Sunday afternoon, I say, passed in acute discomfort.

It was just at this time of discord that a new danger threatened the College in the shape of an unheard-of proposition. Coming now, when Hickson's was "a house divided against itself," it had a subtle power.

On the Tuesday morning the Head made it known to Hickson's that the directors of the College (and himself) were not pleased with the last year's school results, and that the present standard of work was not satisfactory. Also, the two houses did not seem to be on the same terms as had existed in former years. Therefore, it was proposed that Carr's and Bowen's should be *entirely separated*, a new schoolhouse being built for the girls. This separation had been effected successfully in several schools in the States, improved results ensuing immediately. However, the directors (and himself) were willing to let Hickson's decide this vital point for themselves, by means of votes—which would be taken next week. Personally, he would be very grieved to see the College he had founded broken up in this way, &c.

When they recovered from the shock, Bowen's grinned maliciously, and the gloom in Carr's House deepened.

"That's done it," said Jonathan Flower. He was a far-sighted youth, and he knew that Hickson's unmixed would be Hickson's no longer. 'During temporary insanity the girls will to a man vote for separation—to say nothing of our own mad juniors—and the old Coll. will bust up. Oh, what an idiot is Mary Baker!" he finished ungallantly.

However, he was right in the spirit, if not exactly correct as to verbalism. In Mary Baker's capable little palm lay the power to restore harmony and re-establish Hickson's in unshakable 'mixedness." Her influence was such that she could, without difficulty, have led Bowen's into the way they should go, while a word (or even half) would have brought

the Englishman to her side as her ally; and these two working together would be a host in themselves against which no Hicksonian opposition could hope to stand. But a False Belief called Pride kept Mary cold and silent, persuaded her that she had not been fairly dealt with, told her that her only course was a neutral one, and that the houses must now settle their own differences. And then the most stupendous thing ever known to the College came to pass.

IV.

The first sickening shock of the Californian earthquake rocked the College to its foundations, and brought every inmate out into the courts. Beyond some broken crockery and a cracked window or so, Hickson's suffered no damage, every one's nerves being trained to bear seismic shocks, for (though never so severe as this) they were not infrequent on the Pacific coast. Therefore, scenting no further danger, Hickson's, blissfully ignorant of the terrible damage and ruin already wrought in San Francisco, went calmly back to bed—with one or two exceptions.

One of the exceptions was a red-headed junior of Bowen's, who thought it would be an interesting and elevating experience to walk along by the river and watch the sun rise. In the corridor she met Mary Baker, who looked less calm than usual. Jane scanned the senior's face, and remarked, "Not scared, Mary?"

"No—not of the shock. Hickson's will fall without the help of any earthquake," replied the prefect, adding, "Cut now, kiddie; I'm going into the Lecture Hall till breakfast."

Outside, Jane stared up at the great gaunt buildings, looking extra grim and huge in the dim grey light of early morning. Hickson's fall? What on earth—Oh, of course, Mary was alluding to the coming separation! Jane shook her brilliant locks out of her eyes, and gazed blankly at nothing. She knew enough to realise that things at Hickson's were very much as they shouldn't be, but she could not understand why the two capable persons didn't hustle around and square things—the two capable persons from Jane's point of view being Mary Baker and Ronald Algernon Stanborough. The junior declared with much mental emphasis that private and personal grievances should be ignored in view of the threatened separation, and that it was the obvious duty of the aforesaid capable persons to buckle to and save the College. Of course, reflected Jane, it was a shame about the Cabinet, but now was the time for Mary to give in gracefully, to heap coals of fire upon Carr's head in the shape of magnanimous forgiveness, and to restore peace between the houses. *Only*—the Britisher must help.

In the meantime the sun, unnoticed by Jane, had risen. Arrived at a knotty point in her meditations, she turned almost unconsciously and walked back to the College in view of breakfast. As she passed through Carr's court she saw that one of the senior study windows was open. Of course, it was Stanborough's. The Britisher was unique at Hickson's in his passion for open windows. At the present moment he was sitting in an armchair, gloomy of countenance, regarding a kettle, the contents of which were several minutes off boiling-point.

"Hallo," said Jane, suddenly making up her mind to do a very daring deed.

Stanborough looked up with the nearest thing to a smile of which he was capable at the moment. Of all Bowen's juniors, he could put up with the red-headed one with least inconvenience.

Jane Hobbs drew a long breath before uttering what she feared was a most portentous falsehood.

"Mary Baker wants to speak to you, and she's in the Lecture Hall till brekker,"—then she moved quickly aside as the Britisher, leaving the kettle to boil or not to boil, vaulted through the open window and strode out of the court. He felt that some crooked ways were about to be made straight.

Jane followed at a trot, and on seeing Mary Baker emerge from the Lecture Hall just in time to meet Stanborough face to face on the threshold, the junior was seized with a sudden violent desire for immediate self-effacement, and darted into the Library.

Ronald raised his cap. It was not usual to observe this form of etiquette at Hickson's when within the College grounds, but the Englishman had experienced some difficulty in breaking himself of the habit.

What Stanborough might have said, and what Mary might have replied, must be left to fertile imaginations. Something terrible was happening. The Britisher reeled where he stood, and then dragged Mary out into the court. A great rumbling noise, seeming to come from the very innermost parts of the earth, was growing and growing into a dull roar. The courts heaved and cracked. The buildings shook and trembled and groaned. In a moment crowds of boys and girls, masters and servants came rushing out—panic-stricken. With a terrible rending

crash, the Library, swaying to and fro, crumbled to the ground amid clouds of dust, knocking out parts of the Lecture Hall roof, and scattering broadcast fragments of brick and mortar.

"Up to the fields—quick!" shouted Stanborough, and the Hicksonians, mad with fear, obeyed his voice in a terrified rush. Stanborough turned to Mary, who seemed petrified, and, catching hold of her arm, prepared to follow.

"Ronald—wait. Jane Hobbs is—*under there*. I saw her go in."

Mary's voice was shaking with horror, and

HE CAME TO A PADDED CHAIR, AND SAW A SMALL HAND CLINGING TO ONE OF THE LEGS.

Stanborough felt his teeth close in a vice as he surveyed the hideous ruin of the Library. Little tremors still shook the earth at intervals. The court was almost empty. The Head, his face white and lined with anxiety, hurried past, urging every one's immediate flight to the open. The Englishman, unable to add to the Head's worry, let him pass, and then called to five or six senior boys, who were still within hearing.

"Hodgson, and Barnes, and all of you, come! There's a kid under here."

"It's impossible to clear it, Stanborough," shouted Hodgson, whose face was grey with fear, advancing only a few steps.

"I tell you there's a kid buried here!" The Britisher looked dangerous and cursed softly in his excitement. Every minute saved might be worth life to Jane Hobbs.

"Well, we're sorry, but it is madness to wait. The whole show may collapse at any minute," rejoined Hodgson, who, to do him full justice, was a thorough-bred coward—possibly the only one Hickson's possessed. The fellows with him were advancing, unwillingly and slowly, but still, advancing.

"Buck up," said the Englishman savagely. They did, but Hodgson remained stationary.

It is said, and I think rightly, that at a supreme moment the man with good in his heart and mind is shown by the Power from whom that good emanates, what course to take. Without a moment's hesitation Ronald Stanborough cut across the court and, with one straight blow, knocked Hodgson down.

In less than half the time it has taken you to read all this, it was over, and seven boys, feverishly aided by one girl, were clearing away fragments of brick and mortar, using spades, forks, and other gardening tools snatched from the tool-shed. The Britisher held the reins and drove right up to the bit. He was thinking with shut teeth of his first miserable weeks at Hickson's, when the only one to offer any sort of friendship had been a little red-haired junior with great greenish-grey eyes and a keen love of sport. After nearly two hours' hard work, books, broken pieces of furniture and pictures came to light. Stanborough shuddered as he unearthed a white marble bust of George Washington. When he came to a padded arm-chair, and saw a small hand clinging to one

of the legs, it needed all the strength of the manhood in him to say, "Found!" in steady tones.

The red-headed one was not hurt. When, in the course of a minute, she came to herself, she explained that she had heard a great noise, and, seeing the ceiling coming down, had promptly wriggled under the arm-chair, whose generous padding had saved her from instant death.

That night, fearful of a recurrence of the earthquake, Hickson's camped up in the fields. In the general danger, all uncharitableness being dissolved into its native nothingness, true harmony was restored. Carr's and Bowen's were once more Hickson's, without fear of separation.

Only one Hicksonian realised any extent of the damage and ruin, the terror and panic, wrought in San Francisco. Jonathan Flower stood a little apart from the others, and stared across at the ominous red glow which shone brighter and brighter over the doomed city, with a lump in his throat, and a smart under his eyelids. Then he turned and gazed up at the College walls—red brick, stalwart, *safe*. And a glow of gratitude came over him. He saw, too, the Britisher erecting tents for weary little Bowenites, while Mary Baker (near enough to pass the time of day) distributed rations to hungry boys of all sizes. And Jonathan grasped the fact that if the material walls were safe, the soul of Hickson's College (mixed) was far safer.

"It has given us a fresh start," he said aloud. "We were wanting it rather badly, too."

THE END.

AT CAMP.

(A fragment overheard the day before the general inspection at which the full strength of all ranks must be present.)

THE MAJOR: "But what reason have you for saying you wish to be excused parade to-morrow?"

OFFICE CLERK (under ordinary circumstances excused all drills): "Please, sir, I take up more than the regulation space in the ranks, sir."

THE STAMPS OF BAHAMAS.

OF all the West Indian colonies, few are more popular amongst stamp collectors than the Bahamas, and that popularity may be largely traced to the attractive design of the first penny stamp. In the opinion of many it is the prettiest of all the many beautiful early British colonials. It remained in use from 1859 till 1884, and, during those years, it underwent many striking gradations of shade. The design is a diademed, full-faced, early portrait of Queen Victoria, enclosed in an oval. It was designed and engraved on steel by Messrs. Perkins, Bacon, and Co. Such a beautiful stamp was enough to make the philatelic fortune of any country. Even in the colony's stamps of to-day some of the embellishments of that first stamp are reproduced as prominent ornaments. For simple beauty, for effectiveness, and for their inclusion of all that a postage stamp need contain, I doubt whether the three values of the first, diademed issue of Bahamas have ever been surpassed, or even equalled, in the thousands of designs that have since been added to the catalogue. Place it alongside the stiff, geometrical design of the current king's head type and note the striking gracefulness of the old stamp, as compared with the inartistic woodenness of the later type. One philatelist of my acquaintance who specialises in this colony, is so enamoured of this same penny stamp that he never seems to be able to resist the temptation of buying, even at long prices, every fine mint copy that comes his way. When he is gathered to his fathers to sleep the sleep of the just, there will be a few more copies of this much-coveted stamp on the market than there are to-day, for it is very scarce in mint condition.

The Bahamas are a group of islands between Cuba and Florida. They comprise some 3000 low coral islets, rocks, and banks. All are British, and about twenty of the islands are inhabited. The chief island is Providence, on which is Nassau, the capital, with a population of 12,000.

Their Philatelic History.

The first postal issue was made in 1859 and consisted of the 1*d.* lake, to which I have already referred. This was followed two years later by two other values, 4*d.* and 6*d.* All three are distinguished as unwatermarked. Then in 1863 there was a reissue of the 1*d.*, 4*d.*, and 6*d.*, with the addition of a 1*s.* value, on paper watermarked Crown CC. These stamps lasted, without change, for twenty years. Then, in 1883, came the one and only provisional ever issued by the colony, the 6*d.* value surcharged "Fourpence." In 1884–98 there was an issue of a series of seven values, from ½*d.* to £1, all of one uniform design. A pictorial set of four values was sent out in 1901-1903, and is known as the Queen's Staircase series. In 1902, seven values of the King's Head type appeared, watermarked single CA, and now we are getting the same series on multiple CA paper.

As will be noted, the early issues are mostly rather expensive.

1859. The first stamp issued was a solitary 1*d.* value, designed and engraved by Messrs. Perkins, Bacon, and Co., printed on unwatermarked paper and issued imperforate. Ten years ago this stamp was a rarity and was priced 40*s.*, but some eight or nine years ago a lot of sheets came mysteriously on the market and fine unused copies may now be had for 10*s.* As will be seen, our illustration is from a perforated copy.

No Wmk. Imperf.

	Unused.	Used.
	s. d.	*s. d.*
1*d.*, lake	10 0	60 0

1861. A series of three, values, still printed on unwatermarked paper, but perforated. The 1*d.* was a reissue; the 4*d.* and 6*d.* contained the same diademed head of Queen Victoria, but with a different framework, as illustrated.

No Wmk. Perf.

	Unused.	Used.
	s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*
1*d.*, lake . .	60 0	15 0
4*d.*, rose . .	90 0	30 0
6*d.*, lilac . .	90 0	30 0

1863. The same designs all printed on paper watermarked Crown CC. These stamps were printed by Messrs. De la Rue and Co., who designed and engraved a 1*s.* value to add to the series.

Wmk. Cr. CC. Perf. 12½.

	Unused.	Used.
	s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*
1*d.*, red . .	5 0	5 0
4*d.*, rose . .	12 6	7 6
6*d.*, violet . .	4 6	1 6
1*s.*, green . .	2 0	2 0

1882. The 1*d.* and 4*d.* printed on paper watermarked Crown CA.

Wmk. Cr. CA. Perf.

	Unused.	Used.
	s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*
1*d.*, vermilion . .	4 0	3 0
4*d.*, rose . . .	20 0	4 0

1883. Provisional. Owing to a shortage of the 4*d.* value a number of the 6*d.* of the then current stamp were surcharged "Fourpence" in ordinary capitals. This provisional is one of the rarities of the colony and is very scarce both unused and used.

Provisional.

	Unused.	Used.
	s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*
"Fourpence" on 6*d.*, violet. .	40 0	—

1884-98. A new series of a new and uniform design for all values was designed and engraved by Messrs. De la Rue and Co., and printed by them on paper watermarked Crown CA and perforated.

Wmk. Cr. CA. Perf. 14.

	Unused.	Used.
	s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*
1*d.*, carmine . .	0 2	0 3
2½*d.*, blue . .	0 5	0 2
4*d.*, yellow . .	0 9	0 8
6*d.*, mauve . .	1 3	1 3
1*s.*, green . .	3 0	—
5*s.*, sage-green .	10 0	10 0
£1, Venetian red .	30 0	30 0

1901-3. Four values of a new pictorial design, engraved and printed, in two colours, by Messrs. De la Rue and Co., representing what is termed the Queen's Staircase, a mysterious curiosity in the neighbourhood of Nassau. The central picture shows a great passage-way cut through the solid coral rock, about an eighth of a mile in length. It is 40 ft. wide and 70 ft. deep, and at the end is what is called the Queen's Staircase (cut in the rock), which leads to Fort Fincastle, built, about 150 years ago, on high land just above the stairway. The exact object of this cutting is not known, but it is presumed it was to allow the soldie s to pass to and from the harbour and fort without observation.

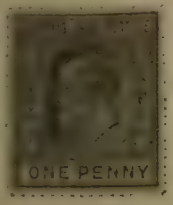
Wmk. Cr. CC. Perf. 14.

	Unused.	Used.
	s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*
1*d.*, red, centre black . .	0 2	0 2
5*d.*, orange ,, . . .	0 7	0 7
2*s.*, blue ,, . . .	2 6	2 9
3*s.*, green ,, . . .	3 9	4 0

1902. Seven values, King's Heads, all of uniform design, designed, engraved, and printed by Messrs. De la Rue and Co. on paper watermarked Crown CA and perforated 14.

Wmk. Cr. CA. Perf. 14.

	Unused.	Used.
	s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*
1*d.*, carmine . .	0 4	—
2½*d.*, ultramarine . .	0 4	0 4
4*d.*, yellow . . .	0 6	0 7
6*d.*, brown . . .	0 8	0 9
1*s.*, grey-black, value carmine . . .	1 4	1 4
5*s.*, lilac, value blue .	6 6	6 6
£1, green, value black .	24 0	—



Wmk. Multiple CA. Perf. 14.

	Unused.	Used.
	s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*
½*d.*, yellow green . .	0 1	—
1*d.*, carmine . . .	0 2	—
4*d.*, yellow . . .	—	—

Our illustrations are made from picked copies selected from the stock of Messrs. Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., and kindly placed at our service.

Review.

A Movable Leaf Permanent Printed Album.

At last we have a movable leaf permanent printed album, and one that we can unhesitatingly recommend. Is is the well-known standard album published by Messrs. Whitfield King and Co., printed on loose, separate leaves fitted into

their Paragon covers. We have already noticed both the album in its bound form and the Paragon covers. It will be remembered that the album provides a printed space for every stamp, with a miniature illustration of the type in each space, artistically arranged in series or sets of stamps. The Paragon covers are fitted with a strong steel spring which grips the leaves so firmly that there is none of the friction and consequent rubbing of the stamps so unavoidable in all other movable leaf albums.

By using these albums, *absolute permanency is ensured*, as extra leaves can be added anywhere at any time, thus keeping the stamps of each country always together, and rendering supplements unnecessary. Then again, a collector desiring to confine his collection for the present to a few selected countries, can select the leaves for these only, put them in a cover by themselves, and store away the remainder of the leaves until they are required. His covers will then contain leaves for those countries only in which he is interested, and others can be added at any time. Supplementary plain leaves can also be had for specialising any country.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. W. (London).—If you take only the stamps of the Kingdom of Italy you will not find it by any means an expensive country. In fact, I do not see how you could spend £10 a year on it unless you went in largely for blocks and sheets. In the eyes of the specialist it is not a show country, for there is nothing very rare in it, hence no great show would be made of it. But if you take in the States of Italy you have much more scope and more interesting work. Why not take at least Italy and the Roman States? I shall probably during the coming winter write up Italy as a cheap country for the beginner to specialise.

Athos (Avranches). — (1) Spanish stamps overprinted "Correo Español Marruecos" are Spanish stamps for use in Spanish post offices in Morocco. (2) An article on Finland in the December number of THE CAPTAIN will tell you how to distinguish Finnish from Russian stamps. (3) The V.R. and crown mark on your English stamp is only an obliteration. (4) No, stamps cut off post-cards and envelopes should not be stuck into a postage-stamp album. (5) The only guide to the recognition of different issues of stamps is a catalogue.

Heligoland (Berks). — Heligoland stamps require an expert to separate genuine from forged. Samoa are easier, presuming you are referring to the first issue, of which there are troublesome reprints. The genuine are never perforated all round, the reprints are always perforated all round. The 1*d.* Cape of Good Hope stamp, overprinted "Orange River Colony," with stop after Colony omitted, is catalogued at 12*s.* 6*d.* In a block of six it is even more valuable, so don't separate the variety from the block, but keep it all intact.

L. C. (London).—As you are resident in London you would do well to join a society and get a little more experience before deciding on specialising. You might join the Junior Society which meets weekly on Saturdays at Exeter Hall, Strand, W.C. The address of the secretary is, H. F. Johnson, 4 Portland Place North, Clapham Road, S.W. The subscription is 1*s.* 6*d.*

A. J. K. (Transvaal).—It is very difficult to advise in the choice of an album without knowing what is your limit in price, for you can get albums from 1*s.* to £5. Probably your best plan will be to write to the leading philatelic publishers, whose advertisements and addresses you will find in THE CAPTAIN, for particulars and specimen pages of their albums, mentioning your limit in price, and then make your own choice.

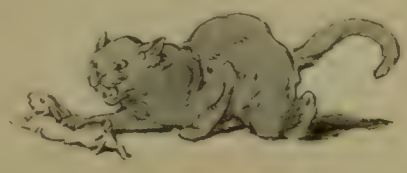
W. A. (Rochester).—The first Queen's Heads of Canada, issued in 1851-7, faced to left, then in 1868 to right, and in 1893 and since to left. Why these changes have been made I cannot say. The custom in our coinage is to turn the head of each sovereign to face differently from that of his predecessor. And this custom is generally supposed to be followed in our English and Colonial stamps.

Iolanthe (Dublin).—The Orange Free State 4*d.* on 6*d.* blue V.R.I. is catalogued at 6*d.* unused, so you were justified in having your doubts about your friend's valuation at 20*s.* to 30*s.* The Army official 1*d.* with the error "OFFICIAI" is catalogued at 12*s.* 6*d.* used. Official stamps are not now priced unused, as they are not supposed to be obtainable unused.

J. L. (Belfast).—I cannot understand why the corners of your stamps should crack and break off. I have been collecting for over thirty years and I have never had a corner crack and break off. You don't happen to keep your album in the oven, do you? It must be due to rough handling. Be a little more gentle with them. Certainly; the value is considerably reduced if the corners are broken off. I don't know any Danish issue of 1885, nor the defective "A" you inquire about.

A. C. C. (Dresden).—The labels you send cannot be included in a collection of postage stamps. They can only be classed as curiosities or souvenirs.

Bullet (Huddersfield).—Orange Free State stamps surcharged T F are telegraph stamps, not postage, and I am sorry I cannot say anything as to their value.



STORIES OF STOWAWAYS.

FOUNDED ON FACT.

By ANDREW HENRY LOWE.
AUTHOR OF "OUR CABIN TABLE," &c.

Illustrated by E. S. Hodgson.

I. CAUGHT IN A DEATH-TRAP.

"WELL, Lamp-trimmer, busy as usual?"

"Yes, sir. You see, Mr. Purser, I've never been one, all my days, to sit long idle, and the older I get the more ill at ease I am if I'm doing nothing. I don't understand it altogether, but when my hands are unemployed, the mind begins to work, and the thoughts are not always so pleasant as they used to be."

"It is quite easily understood, nevertheless, Lamp-trimmer. A conscientious mind tends to view the past with regret, and the future with apprehension."

"Perhaps there's something in the regret and apprehension, sir, but I'm not so sure about the conscientiousness."

"That is because of your conscientiousness, Lamp-trimmer. We are never sure of our best virtues, our greatest abilities. This makes us put forth more effort, and leads us onward to as near perfection as it is possible for frail humanity to attain to."

The Lamp-trimmer—who had very soon something thrilling to relate—shook his head doubtfully.

"Now, Lamp-trimmer, you know me well enough by this time, perhaps, to understand that I am not a flatterer. You are too old to be spoilt by a little wholesome and deserved praise; therefore, I have no hesitation in saying that you are the most conscientious lamp-trimmer and one of the most conscientious men I have ever known."

"You are pleased to say so, sir."

"It is the truth. I know it. I am sure of it. I see it every day in the devoted manner in which you keep your deck brass-work shining. Have you ever read Eugène Sue's great work 'The Mysteries of Paris,' Lamp-trimmer?"

"Yes, sir, and a grand book it is."

"Then you will remember that Madame Piquelet styles the beneficent and disguised Rodolph, her *Prince of lodgers*, all unconscious that he was actually a prince. Well, you are my prince of lamp-trimmers, and nothing would please me better than to hear of your turning out to be a veritable prince and coming into your inheritance."

The Lamp-trimmer turned upon me a strange look; desisting from polishing a companion porthole the while.

"That sounds queer, sir, and so it does."

"Why, Lamp-trimmer?"

"Because I was once, only once before, called *the Prince of Lamp-trimmers*, with a wish that I might enter into a princely inheritance. Only it wasn't an inheritance in this world that was meant, I'm thinking. Not that I attached much importance to what was said at the time, sir; but it does seem curious that the very same words should be spoken of one twice in a lifetime, and such out-of-the-way words, too."

"May I inquire the circumstances of the former occasion?"

"Well, it was in connection with a stowaway, sir."

"A stowaway?"

"Yes, sir; and a queer case it was, too, caught in a death-trap, as he was, poor fellow!"

The lamp-trimmer—a fine, benevolent man, advanced in years—had now finished his deck brass-work; and, following him to his lamp-room, which he kept scrupulously neat and clean, this is the interesting story I got from him:

"Have you ever sailed on the *Scythian*, sir?"

"Never, but I know her well."

"I was lamp-trimmer of her when this strange thing happened. We were bound for the St. Lawrence; the first voyage of the season.

"We were six days out and in the Ice

STRETCHING MY BODY WELL INTO IT, I SHOUTED DOWN THE VENTILATOR.

Track. It was a clear afternoon, with a light breeze, and not much sea; but it was bitterly cold, with a leaden sky. Between two and three o'clock, I found myself quite finished up in the lamp-room for the time being. All the night lights were cleaned, trimmed, oiled, and ready for use.

"I had two or three hours ahead of me with nothing to do in the way of duty, and I thought of having a spell at a model yacht I was making for one of the skipper's youngsters.

"But, somehow, I could not settle down to this job, although I was anxious to finish it. I was restless, with that curious fidgety restlessness one often has at sea. No doubt you understand it well, sir.

"I had a strong notion to go on deck and have a look round at the brass-work. True, I knew it couldn't be much in need, as I had been over it all since leaving port. It looked, too, as though we were going to have some snow-flurries soon, and what was the use of polishing brass-work exposed to murky weather? Better to content myself in my snug lamp-room, working at the model.

"But I could not rest, and that's the fact; so up I went, with my gear, and gave one a bit of a touch up here, and another a fresh scrub, there.

"There were very few passengers on deck. As I have said, it was bitter cold and very uninviting, and we had not yet sighted an iceberg to attract their attention. As you know as well as I do, sir, after two o'clock on a cold day with nothing around to arouse interest, is an hour when those who don't need to expose themselves prefer an afternoon nap or a seat by the stoves.

"I was just about to give it up, feeling it a mighty cold job in the piercing north breeze, and thinking that my afternoon cup of tea with chips wouldn't go amiss, when it occurred to me to take a look at the condition of the ventilators on the quarter-deck. As you may have noticed, sir, the *Scythian's* ventilators have brass rims round the edges of their mouths.

"It was these that I wanted to see. Well, they weren't in a very bad state, but, as I saw it wouldn't take long, I determined to give them a rub, and I went off for the ladder for mounting to them.

"I'm blest, sir, if I haven't puzzled and puzzled why I was so loath to go below that afternoon, shivering as I was, but there's no getting to the bottom of it. It's like many more queer experiences we have at sea, that landlubbers wouldn't believe in if one was soft enough to tell them. That's a true

saying, sir, so it is, about them that go down to the sea in ships.

"I was at the second last ventilator, and sorry I ever started them, seeing it wasn't at all a needful job, when a thing happened that gave me quite a turn, and soon drove the cold out of my blood, bringing out a hot sweat, in fact, all over my body.

"I heard a voice, a strange, unearthly, far-away voice, saying in tones just distinct enough for me to hear them, and no more: '*Help, help! quick, quick! I'm dying! Help!*'

"'Goodness gracious!' I said to myself, 'what's that? Where are these words coming from?'

"I wasn't far from the mizzen shrouds, standing on my ladder, about twelve feet above the deck. I was satisfied that the sound came from aloft, so I looked up, thinking that some foolhardy passenger might have mounted the rigging to the cross-trees and taken fright on looking down; as I had known to happen in my sailing-ship days, going to Australia.

"But there was no one aloft, and, in fact, there was no one on this afterpart of the deck at all, except the junior officer, whose duty it was to keep an eye on our standard mast-head compass, and whistle the ship steady on her course. The saloon of the *Scythian* is amidships, as you know, sir, and the second cabin immediately below and forward of the bridge. In the fore 'tween decks of the after end of the vessel we had steerage passengers, as well as forward; but there were none of any class right underneath the ventilator I was working at.

"'Ah!' I said to myself, 'some one is playing me a trick. Hiding behind a ventilator, or perhaps between the wheel-house and the stern rail, somebody is trying on a lark at my expense.'

"The voice sounded so strange and far away that it was hard to tell where it came from. It reminded me of the tones of a ventriloquist or of a parrot speaking quietly in its throat.

"Even while I was thus puzzling over the thing, again came the cry: '*Help, help! quick, quick! I'm dying! Help!*'

"I'm not what you would call easily shaken, sir, but I felt jarred by the weirdness of the thing; and, getting angry at the thought of any one trying to make a guy of me, I went down off the ladder to find out who it was.

"There was no one about, however; not a soul hiding behind a ventilator or the wheel-house, or any of the other deck erections at hand.

"There were only four passengers altogether on the whole of the afterdeck, and these were standing in a group too far forward to make sounds of the kind to reach me.

"The faint cry for help could not, of course, have come from the water; yet, before I returned to my ladder to finish up my last brass rim, I took a look over the side, but I soon saw this was nonsense, and gave it up.

"I noticed that Mr. Watson, the Fourth Officer, took a queer sort of squint at me as I turned away from the rail, and it suddenly dawned upon me that he was my tormentor. It was a dog-tiring, monotonous job walking up and down there for four hours, with only the heaving of the log, an occasional run to the bridge, and a chat with the second mate, to relieve the dreariness.

"Mr. Watson was a cheery young fellow, up to all manner of pranks, and he and I were great friends. I saluted him as our eyes met, and cried out: 'It's a cold afternoon for you, sir'; meaning that I wasn't surprised at his seeking to beguile the time amidst such cheerless weather with a little fun at my expense. Certainly, he had never tried on this sort of game before, and it might have occurred to me that it was hardly one for a sailor-man to play.

"Convinced that I had cutely solved the mystery, I mounted my ladder once more to finish up quickly, for my hands were like ice and I was wearying for my cup of tea, it being now past the usual time for it.

"I was not well up the ladder when the low, dismal cry came again: '*Help, help! quick, quick! I'm dying! Help!*'

"I looked down sharply at the Fourth Officer, to catch him in the act, but to my astonishment I found that it could not be he, for he was looking up at the mast-head compass, with the glasses held to his eyes by his two hands, and his whistle between his teeth. He was about to steady her on her course.

"The fact that the sound could not have come from Mr. Watson gave me quite a turn. If not from him, then who could be at the bottom of it! Was there something wrong with me? Was it imagination? Was I becoming dotty, as the fellows forward said the boatswain was, at periods?

"'It's high time I was down out of this,' I said to myself. 'A fine go it will be if I'm getting crazy. We'll see what a good cup of tea will do. I feel as though I could go

for half a dozen, after this experience'; and I was moving down the ladder when something new caused me to mount it again with quite a fresh light breaking in my mind.

"There was a sound of something tapping on the ventilator, faintly but distinctly.

"'Good heavens!' I thought, 'has the sound been coming up the ventilator all the time? Can any one be down there?'

"Stretching my body well into it, and making a trumpet with my hands, I shouted down the ventilator:

"'Hullo! Is there anybody down there?'

"'Yes,' came a response, in the same voice from the depths.

"'Who are you, and how did you get down there?' was my next question, and a precious stupid one it was; but I was brought up all of a sudden, like; and when a man is in that state, through something uncanny taking the wind out of his sails, he usually speaks and acts like a blockhead till he gets under steerage way again.

HE WAS A BONNY, FAIR-HAIRED LAD OF NINETEEN.

"'I—I stowed away, and haven't been able to get out, and I'm—I'm starving—and—and dying. Oh, quick, quick; let me out; let me out.'

"I was down that ladder in double quick time.

"Of course I don't need to tell you, sir, that the Third and Fourth Officers have all to do with the supervising of the stowage of the cargo, checking the stevedores in the interests of the ship.

"'Mr. Watson,' I said, quite excited by this time, 'there's a man, a stowaway, down below. I've just discovered it. He cries up that he's dying—up that starboard ventilator. How does the cargo stand below, sir, for getting at him handy?'"

"'Great Jupiter! a stowaway! and we six days out. No wonder he feels dying like. Where do you think he is—in one of the 'tween decks or in the hold?'

"'He must be in the hold, sir; very likely he got down the hatch ladders and crawled up on some piece of cargo immediately below the ventilator, when loading was going on in port.'

"'Very likely, Lamps; and by thunder, it will take a fine time to get to him down there; for, below our feet, right to the hold, she's

chock-a-block with heavy cargo, up to the top of the spar-deck hatch there. You shout down, Lamps, that he's to keep up his pecker for a bit, and I'll report this to the bridge.'

"In less than a jiffy, sir, the scene on that afterdeck and around that ventilator was totally changed.

"Led by the Fourth Officer, there appeared the boatswain and the whole watch of seamen on deck, and the captain wasn't long in rousing up from his customary nap and joining us. Preparations were at once made for taking off hatches and shifting heavy cargo, and soon the winches were rattling away.

"Finding that it might be one hour, two hours, or longer, ere they could reach him, I went off and mixed some warm condensed milk in a can, and, first sending down a globe lantern to let him see and cheer him a bit, I sent the milk into the depths.

"Our doctor, with the Purser, was on the spot by this time, and tasted the milk, to make sure it wasn't too strong.

"'Shout to him to drink it slowly, Lamps,' said he, and I did so.

"By this time, the news had got all round the vessel, and every mother's son of the passengers crowded aft, and the women folks, too; even some that had not come out of their bunks from the beginning of the voyage. It was quite a sight to see them, all silent and eager-eyed.

"There was constant speculation as to the outcome of the affair. Would he live? Would those seeking their way down to him so eagerly be in time? Who was he? Was he young, middle-aged, or old? How had he got down to such a part? Six days out and buried away in such a hole, amongst the rats and the cargo, without food or water!

"So the multitude chattered on.

"Three hours passed ere they got at him. By our doctor's orders, wine diluted, and beef-tea were sent down in small quantities every half-hour.

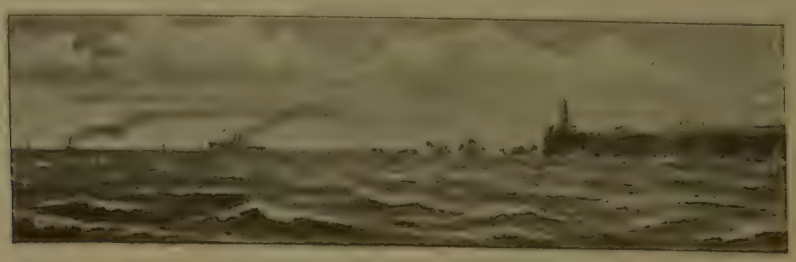
"They hoisted him carefully up in a chair made of canvas for the purpose, and what a cheer was raised when his hand appeared above the combings of the spar-deck hatch! But this was a mistake. The cheering, the hundreds of faces, all turned towards him, and the wide expanse of the surrounding sea were too much for him, and, while quite conscious and wide-eyed when he first appeared, he went clean into a dead faint before we had time to remove him from his canvas supports.

"He was a bonny, fair-haired lad of nineteen, well educated, respectably connected and of good disposition. He had taken a strong fancy to see the old country to which his parents belonged, had saved the amount of a passage, and had hoped to get a job at his trade in an engine-fitting shop. But he had struck on a bad time, when thousands of such workers were going about idle, and, having spent his savings, he had been forced to stow away; choosing, in his ignorance, a most unlikely, dangerous part.

"We put him into the ship's hospital and took good care of him, and by the time we reached Montreal he had rallied considerably, although likely to suffer for a time from the effects of his long confinement in the hold.

"His mother came down for him from Ontario, and a fine, homely person she was, and showed her gratitude by sending down a barrel of apples that Fall from their own orchard to the captain and four officers, and good ones they were. I got one also, with a tub of butter and a cheese in addition.

"When saying good-bye to me before leaving Montreal with her boy, she declared that I should always be to her *the prince of lamp-trimmers*, and that she would pray that I might some day enter into a princely inheritance."



THE HANDY-MAN IN THE DARK-ROOM.

AT the time when I began to dabble in photography a guinea went a much shorter way in the purchase of accessories than it does to-day. Guinea hand-cameras were unheard of, and plates cost double what they do now. Chemicals and dark-room accessories fetched prices which the modern amateur would jib at. So, except for wealthy people, economy had to be considered, and folk made shift with a good many homely contrivances such as would now hardly be worth the time spent upon their manufacture.

There must always be a number of photographers who have to save their pence and shillings wherever possible, and it is of these that I am thinking particularly as I sit down to write this article. Moreover, so far as young people are concerned, the actual making of a fitment is often as advantageous as the mere saving of coin; so that even readers who can afford to dip in their pockets when they desire an addition to their apparatus will gain by acting handy-man now and then.

The starting-point for the economically minded amateur is

Rigging up a Camera.

The elaborateness of the machine must necessarily depend, to a great extent, on his manual skill as a carpenter. There is no reason why a really clever workman should not turn out a bellows camera of a quality to bear comparison with shop-stuff. But I rather fancy that the amateur usually confines himself to the simplest type—the box form—when he makes on the premises. My letters this month include one from a gentleman (whom I will designate by his initials, "R. G. C.") setting forth how, for a very small sum, he put together a quarter-plate camera which, as the reproduction of a picture taken with it shows, does its work quite efficiently. The directions are too long to give in full; so I will extract their gist, appending remarks in square brackets.

The Box

measured 5¼ × 4 × 6 in. and was made of ⅜-in. deal. [I think something rather thinner would suffice.] The lens was captured from a pair of field-glasses—an "achromatic" of about 5½-in. focus. A quarter-pound cocoa-tin, with the bottom cut out all but an edging, served for lens mount. To accommodate this a hole of the correct size was cut in one end of the box—the other was open, of course. The lens was placed, convex side outwards, at the bottom end of the mount, and kept in position by a ring of cardboard one inch wide. [This should be seccotined to the tin.] "Next come the stops. A rather large one for focussing and a couple of smaller ones for exposing will be all you need—say f/11, f/32, and f/64, which for a quarter-plate camera would be about ½, ⅛, and $\frac{1}{32}$ of an inch respectively. They are most easily and satisfactorily managed by making a cardboard disc, of the same diameter as the lens, with a hole half an inch across in the middle. Then at a point on the side pivot a fan-shaped piece, so that it can, while inside the barrel, swing clear of the central hole. In this must be cut the other two stops ¼ and $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch in diameter, so arranged that each can come over the centre of the large hole without the other overlapping its edges. . . . A simpler method is to have separate card discs with the various stops cut in them, to be substituted for the first; but these are invariably lost at the critical time."

Fig. 1.—Specimen of view taken with a home-made box-form camera.

[Why not have a little pocket for them on the side of the camera ?] The stops are kept in place by a second strip of cardboard an inch wide, and the superfluous tubing is removed [try filing it through]. The lens mount must be a fairly tight fit in its hole, so as not to do a bit of focussing on its own account. To prevent light reaching the plate through the crack between mount and wood, "R. G. C." fastens an apron of black cloth to the inner end of the mount. [I presume that this is rather "baggy," to allow movement, and has its edges attached to the inside of the front. An alternative might be made of sheet rubber having a circular hole cut in it, while *stretched*, of the same size as the mount. This to be stuck to the outside with the inner edge loose so as to press on the mount.] The inside of the camera [and of the mount] is carefully blackened with dead-black varnish.

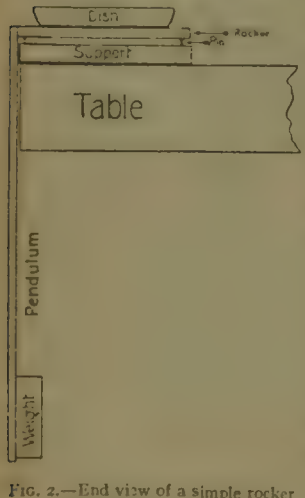


Fig. 2.—End view of a simple rocker for developing-dishes.

The Dark Slides

and focussing screen used by "R. G. C." are those made for "Cameo" cameras (1*s.* 4*d.* each). The attachment of these to the camera is simple. "First, all the edges of the open end are covered with velvet, an inch wide, glued firmly on. Then two long sides and one short are fitted with strips of tin, bent to an L section, and so arranged that the distance left between the projecting tin and the velvet is just the thickness of the plate slide.

The cap is the lid of the tin [also blackened inside].

This is essentially a stand camera for "time" exposures, but I don't doubt that "R. G. C." will be able to fit the lens with an instantaneous shutter of the "drop" variety—a wooden strip with an aperture as large as the lens, falling in a grooved frame attached to the front of the mount.

I will now proceed to a description of how to put together some useful dark-room accessories.

An Impromptu Developing Lamp.

Buy an ordinary cheap oil hand-lamp (price about 1*s.*) and a strip of orange or ruby fabric three inches wider than the height of the lamp. Of this make a twofold cylinder just large enough to slip over the lamp. To the ceiling immediately above the lamp should be pinned a piece of red or orange paper, so that light of those colours only may be reflected.

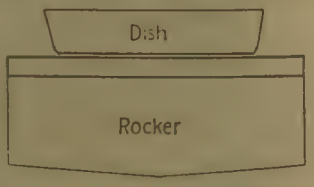


Fig. 3.—End view of a dish rocker to be moved by hand.

A Dish Rocker

may be made in a very short time as follows. Get a piece of half-inch board 12 × 6 in. and drive two wire nails through the long axis about half an inch from each end, so that their points project about a quarter of an inch. File off the head ends flush with the board. Now get a wooden slat 2 ft. 6 in. long, 3 in. wide, and ½ in. thick. Nail this by one end to an extremity of the board, on the nail

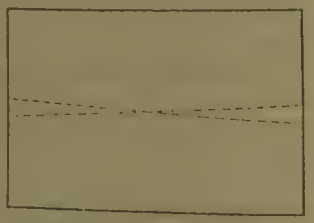


Fig. 4.—Method of cutting the ends of this rocker simultaneously out of one piece of wood, so as to keep the angles equal. The cuts are made along the dotted lines: the first not quite through the board. It is finished off after the board has been completely severed by the second cut.

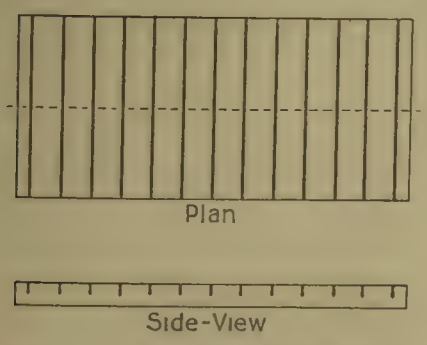


FIG. 5.—The sides for a simple draining-rack are made from a board 6 in. across, with wide saw-cuts carried partly through it an inch apart, as indicated by the thick black lines. Afterwards the board is slit lengthwise along the dotted line, and the halves are—

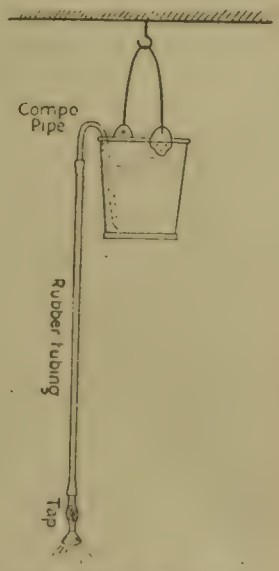


FIG. 7.—When water cannot be led from the main to the dark-room, the amateur may make shift with a bucket and syphon pipe.

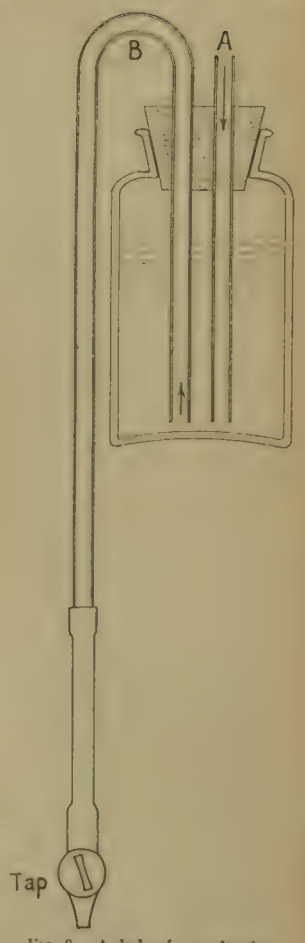


FIG. 8.—A dodge for syphoning off developing solution from a store bottle. Pipe A admits air through the solution as it is required to take the place of the liquid drawn off through pipe B. For the sake of illustration the pipes are shown disproportionately large.

side, and load the other end with any heavy object that may be attached conveniently. The nearest blacksmith's rubbish-heap will furnish an assortment of "likely" weights; or you may nail a tin to the slat and fill it with odds and ends of metal. The last item is a bar of flat iron (or a narrow piece of wood faced with tin-plate) with two indentations made in it to accommodate the nail ends. This is laid at right-angles to the edge of a table and the rocker is placed on it, the pendulum being free to swing. The heavier the "bob" of the pendulum the longer will the rocking continue. This appliance is very useful when a lot of plates have to be developed with a developer (such as pyro) which requires that the solution shall be kept in motion. If development is slow you should occasionally turn the dish, so that the swish may not always be in the same direction.

ANOTHER TYPE OF ROCKER

for agitating by hand is of even simpler construction. It consists merely of a board mounted on two supports which are cut at the bottom as in Fig. 3. To get the angles exactly the same in both cases the supports should be sawn out of one board (*see* Fig. 4).

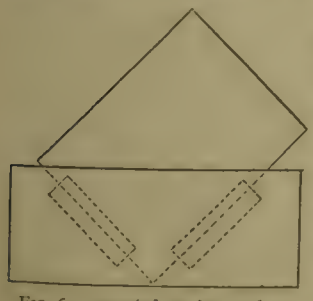


FIG. 6.—mounted on two ends so as to make an angle of 90° with one another. This figure shows a plate set in the rack to drain.

A DRAINING-RACK.

The following are two methods of making a very efficient draining-rack for plates. Get a piece of ¾-in. board 6 in. wide and mark across it with a square as many lines, an inch apart, as you wish it to hold plates (Fig. 5). Also draw a line lengthways down the middle, and a line along the middle of each long edge. With an ordinary ripping-saw cut the board half-way through at the cross-lines. The saw must be "set" sufficiently wide for the cuts to take a plate easily. A less workmanlike, though equally efficient, method is to use a ¼-in. board and to nail (screwing is better) lengths of batten 1 by ⅜-in. in section across the board, placing an object somewhat thicker than a plate between the last batten fixed and the one being fixed, so as to keep the spacing correct.

When this part of the business is finished rip the board down the middle, and mount the halves at right-angles to one another on end pieces as shown in Fig. 6. If the ends are well

weighted with sheet lead the rack may be used in a washer.

Storage for Chemicals.

Any tin may be made fit for storing chemicals if given a good coating of enamel paint inside. The paint will set better if the tin is held near a fire or over an oil-stove till the paint is "runny," and then put in a cool place to dry. During heating the tin should be turned about.

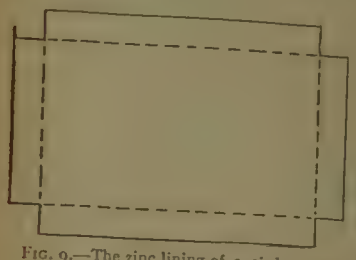


Fig. 9.—The zinc lining of a sink ready for bending along the dotted lines. A piece 4 in square has been cut from each corner.

Old P.O.P. makes good labels if dipped in warm water and clapped, film side inwards, on the tin. Tins of the self-opening variety are most convenient; but cannot be cleaned out or washed easily, as the rim holds back a little of the contents. A slip-over lid is made perfectly air-tight by a broad rubber band cut off an old cycle inner tube.

Water-Supply.—Many amateurs cannot compass a water-supply from the main to their dark-rooms. In my early photographic days I had to make shift with the following contrivance: a bucket suspended from a hook in a rafter; a syphon pipe made partly of "compo" (for the bend), partly of rubber tubing; and a tap (Fig. 7). This did very well for rinsing plates between development and fixing, for diluting solutions, and for other purposes which require water in comparatively small quantities. If used economically, a couple of gallons will go a long way.

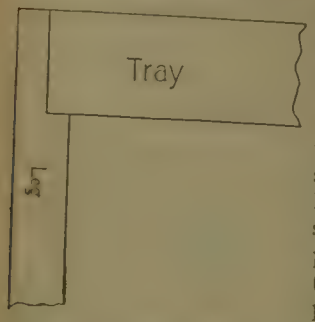


Fig. 10.—The sink rests on four legs partly cut away at the top to give it support. The legs must be screwed tightly to the sides of the tray.

Developers on Tap.

The same principle may be applied to developing solutions when used in large quantities. I append a sketch (Fig. 8) to show how to protect the solutions from the air and yet prevent the formation of a vacuum as the contents of a bottle are drawn off. The cork of each bottle is pierced for two glass pipes, both of which reach almost to the bottom of the bottle. A, the air-pipe, is straight; B, the supply-pipe, is bent in the flame of a spirit-lamp to act as syphon in conjunction with a piece of rubber tubing, which is closed by a tap or clip of some sort. The bottles should be so placed that the measuring-glass may be near the source of illumination.

A Simple Sink. Anybody skilled with the soldering-iron can fit up a sink at very small expense. First, make a tray of ¾-in. wood, of a length and breadth suitable to your needs, and an inside depth of not less than 4 in. Near one corner cut out a circular hole 3 in. in diameter. (This is best done with a fretsaw before the tray is put together.) When assembling the tray, nail on one end and one side only loosely.

Now cut out the lining, from a sheet of zinc, which should be 8 in. longer and wider than the inside of the tray. A piece 4 in. square is removed from each corner (Fig. 9), and the edges are turned up, the long ones first. This operation requires some care, and is facilitated if a framing of stout battens of the exact size of the bottom of the lining be first nailed through the zinc to the work-table with its four outside edges slightly inside the bending lines. The nail holes should be closed with a hammer and soldered up—a very easy matter.

To the bottom of the lining, which must be marked through the hole in the tray, solder a tin funnel of the correct size for the hole. It should have previously been given a couple of coatings of paint. Next put the lining in position and affix the hitherto loose sides of the tray, packing them out a trifle if the lining is a bit too large. Then solder the corners of the lining carefully. If the corners are square, this should not give any trouble at all.

The lining is now well cleaned and given two coatings of enamel paint, and a final one of the acid-resisting paint used for accumulator cases in motor-cycles. Each coating must be quite dry before the next is applied. Punch a number of small holes through the lining into the funnel, and the tray is finished. It is mounted on four stout supports screwed to the sides, partly cut away (Fig. 10) so as to afford a ledge for the bottom to rest on. The tray should slope slightly diagonally towards the outlet. Failing a drain, a small bath (also painted inside) must serve to catch the water. A piece of rubber tubing is attached to the funnel, of such a length as to reach a couple of inches below the edge of the bath. As soon as the waste ceases to make a noise, it is time to empty the bath.

CAPTAIN MAYNE REID.

ON October 22, 1883, died Captain Mayne Reid, the author of many popular books for boys. As a writer, Mayne Reid had many qualifications, for he participated in or was an eye-witness of many of the scenes which he so graphically describes in his works. Although not an artist in the pictorial sense of the word, he limned pictures with great realism, or, to use his own word, *vraisemblance*. Though he may never have seen the place he describes, yet his descriptions and local colouring were astonishingly correct. More than one resident of Jamaica would never believe that "The Maroon" was written by a person who had never set foot in that island; yet Mayne Reid was never in Jamaica.

Mayne Reid was a native of Ireland, of which fact he was proud, referring to it in several of his books. Born in co. Down, 1818, he soon showed in what direction his ambitions lay. Although a quick scholar, he excelled chiefly in athletic sports; but travel and adventure was his sphere, as he amply proved afterwards. Leaving home in 1839, he embarked for America and had a bit of sailoring on the way out. Reaching New Orleans, he tried his hand at many and various occupations, being in turn schoolmaster, storekeeper, and trader. In his capacity of trader, he made several journeys up the Platte, Missouri, and Red Rivers, where he had dealings with the Red Indians, hunting and trapping with them, visiting their lodges and *tepées*, and generally gathering a splendid knowledge of the plains and the dwellers thereon, which was to furnish him afterwards with such copious material for his pen. Closely following this period of his life, came a turn at soldiering. The Mexican war broke out, and seizing his chance he donned a United States uniform and was off to the front as lieutenant in a New York volunteer regiment. He was present at the bombardment and capture of Vera Cruz, at the battle of Cerro Gordo, and at Churubusco, where we find him leading an infantry charge. But the crowning event of his military career was still to come, the event which nearly caused his death. A very strong position, the Castle of Chapultepec, considered by the Mexicans impregnable, had to be taken. Under cover of the artillery a storming-party or forlorn hope rushed up the slope to the castle, but half-way up the *glacis* received a check, seeing which, Mayne Reid volunteered to lead them on, and charging up through a storm of bullets, started scaling the walls, when a bullet went tearing into his thigh, causing him to fall into the ditch. The second man up, shot through the head, fell across Mayne Reid, rendering him unconscious. His wound was severe, and it never ceased to trouble him, being eventually the cause of his death. To Mayne Reid belonged the honour of being first at the castle walls. He spent the next few months in Mexico, afterwards resigning, retiring with the rank of captain. We next hear of him organising and equipping a body of men for Kossuth, the great Hungarian patriot, but the revolution was ended before the legion could reach the scene of action. Unable to help Kossuth with his sword, he afterwards did yeoman service for him with his pen, when Kossuth was a refugee in London, and certain papers attacked him. Now started that period of Mayne Reid's life with which we are chiefly concerned, namely, his career as an author. He produced a steady flow of literature up till his death. The majority of this output was for the youth of England and America, who were not slow to discover and avail themselves of it. He brought a new atmosphere into boys' literature, or, as a writer in the *Speaker* once put it, "We may hope never to forget the joy we had in a writer who first breathed into our European minds the air of the Far West"—a wish I heartily endorse. During his life in England he proceeded with his studies in Natural History and kindred subjects. He possessed a miniature Zoo, containing amongst other animals an owl, a magpie, a baby otter, a fierce badger, white bull-terriers, &c.; whilst farmyard animals were also well represented. Towards the close of his life, he lived in London, and on his death was interred in Kensal Green cemetery. His widow, who wrote a biography of her famous husband, with whom she spent many happy years, during which he was greatly helped by her sympathy and encouragement, died some two years ago.

A. G. CHEVERTON.

A Soldier's Life. By P. G. Thorpe.

I. THE RECRUIT'S DEBUT.

THERE is no more trying period in a soldier's life than the "chrysalis" stage, when he is a raw recruit without any previous experience of soldiering, and especially so when he is without a friend in the barrack-room in whom he may confide, and who n he may make the depository of all his little woes and troubles.

HE IS HANDED OVER TO SOME WELL-CONDUCTED SOLDIER.

True it is that he is usually handed over to some well-conducted soldier to lick into shape, and if he is a decent sort of chap he will not be long before he makes a friend or two amongst his comrades. But this takes time, and, unless he is a lad of some grit, he soon loses heart, and nothing but dire necessity or a sense of moral rectitude will keep him to his work, and prevent him swerving from the straight path.

It is a trite saying that a stranger nowhere feels so lonely as in crowded London, and the same, with truth, may be said of the barrack-room. Separated at a day's notice from all his friends and relatives, he finds himself suddenly housed in a room with men who are all perfect strangers to him. There is plenty of life and bustle, and an abundance of noise going on incessantly amongst them, but for all that he is a "stranger amongst strangers," and hourly he finds the feeling of home-sickness growing stronger and stronger within him.

But an immature lad himself, never, perhaps, having been away from the parental roof in all his life, he misses every moment the companionship of his brothers, his sisters' attentions, his mother's solicitude, his father's dutiful care. His comrades may be good fellows in themselves, but they have grown accustomed to the soldier's careless life—they forget what their own feelings were like under similar circumstances, and they cannot, even if they attempt it, sympathise with him, in the feelings of regretful reminiscence which now and then cause the lump to swell up in his throat.

But he takes consolation in the thought that the step had to be taken some day—that he could not remain tied to his mother's apron-strings all his life, and that what he has done is not the outcome of some rash act, some wild outburst of passion, but is a long premeditated step to which due deliberation has been given in the family councils.

Time, the magical healer of all regrets and heartburnings, assuages his melancholic feelings in the course of a few days, and the daily round of recurring duties provides him with ample employment, keeping him from brooding over the pleasures and happy family life he has left behind him. In a week's time he is as noisy and as joyous as any one of his comrades, and he realises that he has taken to his new life with a zest and a liking that he now wonders were wanting at first.

What troubles him most is the mastering of his recruits' drill. The manual gymnastics he is put through morning, noon, and afternoon are something appalling to him, and he wonders what on earth they were invented for. If he could only appease that irate drill-sergeant he feels that his lot would

WHAT TROUBLES HIM MOST IS THE RECRUITS' DRILL.

indeed be a happy one, but his wrathful instructor gives him no peace until he has mastered the rudiments of his training.

Like a sensible chap he sets himself to do this, and if he remains in this state of mind he soon acquires proficiency, and is passed on from one class to another until at last the eventful day swings round when his squad is examined by the adjutant, and put through every possible evolution, and he finds himself dismissed from drill to take rank as a "duty-soldier."

Meanwhile he has also been acquiring knowledge in the barrack-room. His comrades, ever ready to help a novice, have been giving him daily lessons in the methods of making up his bed, cleaning his accoutrements, folding his great-coat, laying out his kit, keeping his berth tidy, dressing for parade, cleaning his rifle, polishing his "brasses," and in fact doing the various things which are known to the soldier under the collective title of "barrack-room soldiering."

There is a certain time in the day when he has to attend school. These attendances are enforced until he has obtained a certificate qualifying him for his first step of promotion, after which he is excused school until his arm is decorated with the lance-stripe, when he is obliged to attend school again until he obtains a higher certificate qualifying him for further promotion.

Even when dismissed drill as a recruit, he is still called on to attend a recruit's course of gymnastics. This generally lasts about three months, at the end of which his physical development has very much improved, and there is much more stamina and endurance in his system.

Finally, before he emerges altogether from the chrysalis stage he has to fire a recruit's course of musketry. If he be nervous or timorous of the rifle, and makes bad shooting in consequence, he is put back and compelled to fire the recruit's course

HE HAS TO ATTEND SCHOOL.

over again. If, on the other hand, he makes a qualifying score, he becomes, in every sense of the word, a trained soldier, and is allowed to fire his next course with his company.

If he has, in the meantime, shown himself to be a clean soldier and a man of temperate habits, he has not long to wait, after the passing of his recruit's era, before he obtains promotion. Henceforth he may look ahead, with a very proper ambition, to securing in the end the highest prize obtainable in the army, *i.e.*, the commissioned rank, the position of an officer. It is his if his conduct throughout his service is in keeping with his ambition—that he may rest assured of, despite the cold water thrown on such hopes by so many of our pessimistical critics.

Years pass by—the recruit blossoms out into a sturdy soldier—a man of travels and campaigns. He meets with experiences sufficient to obliterate from his memory all thoughts of his early career, yet deep down in his memory will always be found an affectionate recollection of his early days as a "rookie," and the pangs which dealt him such heavy strokes when he first broke loose from the domestic ties.

HE HAS TO FIRE A RECRUIT'S COURSE OF MUSKETRY.

In Search of Smith,

A Romance of Unexplored Australia.

By JOHN MACKIE.

Illustrated by R. Caton Woodville.

CHAPTER I.

THE GENERAL PROPOSES.

"MY dear General, if I had not cultivated politeness in the course of my medical career, I should say that you were talking nonsense. You speak of a vast, unexplored region in Australia as if it were about as big as Yorkshire. You propose to penetrate into a region swarming with hostile blacks, and look for a gentleman whom you are not certain is there. And, lastly, you ask me to accompany you. Pardon me for saying so, but that suggestion is absolutely monstrous. I intend to spend the autumn of my life in quiet retirement, not in dodging the catering department of some cannibal queen."

The General laughed as he bit off the end of a long black cigar. "It's the same old Dickie Payne," he said. "The same stubborn, conservative, severely logical, kind-hearted old Dickie. Twenty years have elapsed since you were the sawbones in my regiment, Dickie, and you have not changed an atom."

"How about the natural process called decay?" I inquired.

"You are not decaying, Dickie," cried the General. "You have moulted a little on top, and your waist measurement has increased half a dozen inches, but, with those exceptions, you're a boy—a positive boy."

"According to your way of thinking," I said, "people will begin to remark that I am showing signs of age when I celebrate my hundredth birthday, and the papers publish the usual lies about my retention of all my faculties. However, let's talk sense. You propose to go and look for your friend Smith. You say that it is the first wish of your life to find him, and that you won't go unless I go with you. You place me in a most awkward position, General."

"The position I place you in is not half so awkward a position as poor Smith is in, if the reports I have received are true," said the General. "I last saw him in Egypt, when he walked most unconcernedly into my tent one day to tell me he was on his way to the unknown portion of Northern Australia. Since then, nothing definite has been heard of him. I have made exhaustive inquiries, and according to the blacks who have wandered down from the interior to the coast, the white man that this dreadful black queen they talk of has kept a prisoner is undoubtedly Smith. He always was a chap for going where no other white man had ever set foot, and he has had some narrow squeaks, but this time he appears to have gone once too often. This queen or chieftainess is an example of the black who dominates his or her fellows by possessing qualities that one associates solely with the white race. Possibly she is not entirely black; she may be a descendant of some half-breed. Anyhow, she wields immense power, and if one of her subjects so much as winks when she doesn't want him to, off goes his head. Why, the blacks who have wandered into civilised parts absolutely shake when they mention her. The lady is said to be physically stronger than any man in her domain, and I should imagine that she is quite capable of picking up her Prime Minister in one hand and chucking him out of the council chamber if he says anything which displeases her. By all accounts she is a terror, one of the worst, and this is the ogress that has got Smith in her clutches."

"Then," I said, getting up and hobbling to the mantelpiece for a match, for my old enemy the gout had me in a close grip, "I think I'll stay here, if you don't mind. I don't fancy interviewing her. But, seriously," I continued, as I resumed my seat, "doesn't it occur to you that all this sounds very like a fairy-

"I daresay it does sound like a fairy-tale," said the General, "a good many true things do. The fact remains that such a woman does exist, and by accounts given at different periods by blackfellows who have never seen one another, she is holding a white man in captivity. Now, not a few white men must have got into her clutches, because it is known that there is plenty of gold in the district that she rules, and in spite of the danger several fellows have been after that gold. Smith thought he was the first, but he wasn't. Nothing more was ever heard of those white men, and so presumably our queen, finding nothing particularly attractive about any of them, disposed of them in the usual way."

"They went into the interior in two senses?" I suggested.

"An old joke, but it will pass," laughed the General. "Yes, we may assume that they served to replenish her stockpot. Smith, however, she found to be a man of different kidney. I know Smith well, and there is no end to his resource. He has had to use his wits so often in order to save his life, that he has developed all sorts of tricks for humbugging the simple native mind. Depend upon it, the queen found him too fascinating a fellow to serve merely as human nature's daily food."

"Well," said I, "go if you like. There is one thing you must remember—your boy Jack won't draw any insurance money. No insurance company on earth would have any dealings with a man proposing to take a trip of this kind."

"My boy Jack is going with me," said the General quietly.

I almost leapt out of my chair, but remembered my gouty foot just in time. "You are going to take a lad of eighteen into a district swarming with cannibals?" I asked.

"The lad of eighteen," said the General, "is six feet high, weighs twelve stone, and can ride a horse and handle a rifle with any man in this country. When he heard that it was my intention to go to Australia, in an emphatic manner that is peculiarly his own he expressed his intention of going with me. You have never met Jack, have you?"

"No," I replied. "I left the service before you married."

"You will find," said the General, "that it is a privilege to know him. Although he is my boy, I've no hesitation in saying that he is the most dare-devil youngster I have encountered, and thirty-five years in the army makes a man acquainted with not a few bold spirits."

"I LAST SAW HIM IN EGYPT, WHEN HE WALKED MOST UNCONCERNEDLY INTO MY TENT."

"Go on." I said. "Who else will be of the party?"

"My man Parker will, of course, go with me, and it would certainly do Maitland—Jack's tutor—a large amount of good to see a little rough life."

"Maitland? What sort of a fellow is he?" I asked.

"Another pleasure in store for you," said the General. "He is the exact antithesis of Jack. I found him down here when I came, you know. He is supposed to be suffering from his nerves, and I should think he is, by the look of him. He is an Oxford man; took a good degree, and won the Newdigate prize among other pots. It seems he has been staying here for a year, and doesn't appear likely to budge. Got just enough money to live on, I should fancy, and doesn't see why he should make any more. At first he seemed inclined to run out of the room when Jack and I came into it, but I fairly cornered him one day, and talked to him like a Dutch aunt."

"What were the sentiments you expressed?" I inquired with a smile.

"Well, I suggested that a 'Varsity man of seven-and-twenty, sound in wind and limb, ought not to be prowling about a hydro among a lot of rheumatic old men and women. I pointed out to him that the longer he stayed the longer he would want to stay. He didn't like it at all."

"So I should imagine," said I. "How did you prevail on him to accept the post of tutor to a young gentleman of the Jack persuasion?"

"Oh, I got him on a soft spot," said the General. "Talked about his classics and how he was letting them rust. Read up Keats on purpose to talk about poetry to him. Got a shilling Emerson in the town and read that, and worked him up into an argument about some of Schopenhauer's theories. Oh, yes! after a time he left off looking as if he'd like to bolt out of the room as I came in, and one day, to my surprise, he laughed, and then I knew I had him. I have offered him a hundred a year with board and lodging and washing and all that sort of thing, if he'll come away and tutor Jack until the young cub goes to Oxford. He's accepted—at least, he says he'll come to me for a month on trial, and yesterday he and Jack went off to my place in Leicestershire. I expect it will be a bit of a job getting him started for Australia, but Parker will manage it. You don't know Parker, do you?"

"No," I said. "Is that yet another pleasure in store for me?"

"Distinctly," said the General. "Parker is about six men rolled into one—a sort of combination of soldier, sailor, bootblack, groom and professional cricketer. There's nothing that's ever been done on the cricket field that he doesn't know."

"Quite a disturbing assortment of characters," I said. "Well, as far as I can make out, Jack and Parker and yourself are eminently suited to undertake this vague expedition. Mr. Maitland will probably die on the voyage, and I'm not coming."

The General rose from his chair. "We leave a week from to-day," he said, "and by that time you ought to have got your gout under. Anyhow, it's a wonderful place, this Southville. I came down after a go of 'flu,' and I feel better than I've felt for ten years. Meeting you has put the finishing-touch to my cure. I never thought when I took train for Southville Hydro. that I should run across Dickie Payne, once of Ours. Think it over, Dickie." He put out his hand. "After all, you might come and see a bit of the world, and turn back when we approach the danger zone."

I, too, rose from my chair. "If I were to come," I said, "I should not turn back until I'd seen you through with the business—but I'm not coming."

"Sleep on it," said the General. "I've been piling on the agony a bit. The blacks Smith is supposed to be with may not be cannibals, and I believe they're approachable if you approach them nicely. I believe they've got Smith, and I'm going to have a look for him. It would not be a bad sort of trip, so don't make your mind up in too much of a hurry. Sleep on it." And with that General Taylor drained his glass, gave me a friendly nod, and strode off to bed.

CHAPTER II.

THE EXPEDITION STARTS.

IN ordinary circumstances, and with an ordinary man, I should have said no, and have stuck to it. But the General was not an ordinary man. More than that, he knew me, and knew just how to play upon my weak points to sway me to agree with him.

Sir Donald was one of the first soldiers in the land. Such was his popularity, indeed, that a brand of biscuits had been named after him. The reader may smile, but stars and orders and decorations and columns in the newspapers do not testify to a man's hold on

the public mind nearly so eloquently as does his name on a biscuit-tin. Was not Garibaldi so honoured? One recalls his famous red shirt—emblem of liberty!—every time one enters a grocer's shop. Is not Wellington also immortalised in boots and knife-powder?

It is unnecessary for me to detail how and why I yielded to the sponsor of the Donald Taylor biscuits, but yield I did. Two days after he had come into my life again we left Southville—with its soft breezes, its public gardens, its bands, and its invalid chairs—for the General's place in Leicestershire. The departure filled me with inexpressible relief, and I believe the General was glad to see the last of this town of white faces and boarding-houses.

Although a person playing no very important part in this narrative, I owe it to the reader to explain that I had come to Southville when I sold my practice in a rural part of Warwickshire of which guide-book makers speak in glowing terms of praise. Having put in the twenty years that had elapsed since I left the R.A.M.C., as the parish doctor of the place, I was thoroughly tired of the beauties which these good gentlemen extolled in such lavish terms. I knew every tree, I might almost say, for miles round. So I retired upon my savings which, added to the substantial sum that the sale of my practice brought me, and the amount realised by the disposal of what little property I owned in the neighbourhood, were sufficient to yield me an income of £300 per annum—an income upon which a man of simple tastes, and no dissipations save a liking for a game of bridge at mild points, ought to manage very comfortably.

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When we arrived in Leicestershire I was duly presented to two members of the expedition—Jack, the General's son, and Maitland. Parker, of course, I got to know in a less formal manner. He was an ex-cavalryman, having left the colours when the South African War came to an end. Throughout the war he had acted as the General's orderly, and had not hesitated a moment in making up his mind whether to remain in the Army or enter Sir Donald's service. Parker was a Cockney, with all a Cockney's ready wit and, if I may borrow a word from our late foes—and spell it correctly by way of a change—"schlimness." He was as ready with his fists as with his tongue, and was a perfect master at "hustling." I would back him to pack up luggage, get it corded, carted to the station, labelled and put in the train against any man. There breathed not the cabman, waiter, or any other like functionary who could steal a march on Parker. In addition, he was perfectly at home with horses, could ride any kind of animal, and was as plucky a fellow as ever put foot in stirrup or glanced along the sights of a rifle.

His all-roundness was wonderful. He followed racing and cricket with avidity—knew the history of every horse of any quality, and could rattle off the points of all the big cricketers with a thoroughness that was surprising. He was, besides all this, a shrewd judge of character—and that was probably why he waited on Mr. Maitland, on the morning of our departure, and reduced the chaos of that gentleman's packing into perfect order in the short space of fifteen minutes.

"It was a job packin' up all them medicine bottles so they wouldn't break," he said to me with a grin, "so I left 'arf of 'em under the bed and the other 'arf on top of the wardrobe."

Undoubtedly it was the versatile and untiring Parker who was responsible for getting us all duly on board the good ship *Dacca*, at Plymouth, bound for Queensland, within the remarkably short space of one week. How he did it I will not attempt to explain. I only know that the moment Sir Donald had mentioned the matter to him, Parker, without lifting as much as an eyelid or expressing a syllable of surprise, immediately placed the telegram book before his master so that he might send a wire to the agents of the company and secure berths. He drew up mysterious lists, resurrected forgotten leather trunks and kit-bags, and began to pack them with such clothing as was necessary for a tropical climate. He also gathered together sufficient firearms to stock a small armoury.

As the General had predicted, Parker took charge of Maitland. He simply told the latter off-handedly that we were all going for a little pleasure trip into the interior of unexplored Australia, and that he would help him with what packing there was to be done. Before the bewildered Oxonian had grasped the import of his communication Parker had taken possession of the luggage and packed it—with certain omissions!

Honestly, I do not believe that the tutor, although the principal party interested, was allowed to entertain any option of making up his mind as to what he should do. Parker settled that. When Maitland crossed the gangway to board our ship, I verily believe he only imperfectly realised he was really *en route* for Australia. Until we were well out at sea and had dropped the pilot, he

might have been a deserter with an affable plain-clothes escort, so jealously was he guarded by the watchful Parker. Never, surely, was a distinguished classic kidnapped in so barefaced a fashion!

I am not going to weary the reader with facts and details of our voyage. It was much of a kind with the average. We had a few dirty spells, during which Maitland yearned in vain for his missing pills, and was copiously supplied with draughts of sea-water, Parker's infallible remedy for all the ills of the bad sailor; but for the most part the weather was glorious, and by the end of a month even Maitland was looking a different man, though he was still very shy and retiring, and not half so bronzed and fit as most young men of his age would have become by this time.

The voyage gave Sir Donald ample time in which to mature his plans and sketch out the route he intended to take. Together we pored over the latest maps and came to a pretty definite conclusion that the particular district we were bound for was still practically unexplored and unknown. The reader may acquaint himself with the geographical position of the district in question by drawing a line through the map of Australia from north to south, almost exactly halving it; then, following this line down about one-third of its distance, he will know as much as we did, during our voyage, about Smith's possible whereabouts.

In due course we transhipped at Thursday Island in Torres Strait and made for Normanton in the Gulf of Carpentaria. From that young and growing little town we went to Burketown on the Albert River, and it seemed to me as if this must certainly be the *ultima thule* of civilisation. Nor was I far wrong, for between it and Port Darwin in the Northern Territory, about a thousand miles distant, there was no other settlement worth calling such; nothing but a few solitary cattle runs—great open plains by the coast where the cannibal black and the wild horse roamed, with here and there long rocky wooded spurs running down from the wild chaotic mountain-land of the northern Never-Never.

I have not paused on the way to analyse our respective emotions when, after six weeks of ocean and sun-baked deck, we found ourselves at the other side of the world under a seldom-changing sky of clear opalescent blue. It will be readily understood that Maitland and myself did not readily grow accustomed to such a complete change of scene and climate. I doubt, indeed, if Maitland ever did grow quite accustomed to it. I believe that his attitude from beginning to end of the adventures we were destined to experience was never anything but that of a wondering tourist, and, moreover, of a tourist who had undertaken the tour much against his will. As for me, let the reader place himself in my shoes and transport himself from a humdrum country village, with its peaceful lowing of cattle, grunting of pigs and clucking of poultry, its uneventful yearly round, its very local gossip, its tiny scandals and trivial excitements; a village where folks—as I had good reason to know—suffered but little from illness, and mostly attained a sturdy old age; a calm, provincial settlement where Time pursued his "everlasting journey" almost unnoticed—let the reader, I say, transport himself in imagination from such a spot to an Australian coast township, peopled by a mingled assortment of white, yellow, brown, and black men, and visited from day to day by a crowd of furtive-eyed, evil-looking, so-called civilised savages, who wore next to nothing in the way of clothing, and always carried spears, clubs, and boomerangs. Such was the heat that, of the whites, no one save the principal store-keeper wore a coat, he in consequence being regarded as a person entitled to give himself airs.

Jack Taylor settled down to his new surroundings with youthful ease; like a kitten starting life in a new home, he investigated everything with boyish zest and curiosity. His spirits never flagged, and his energy was untiring. As for Parker, tropical skies were no novelty to *him*, and the ex-cavalryman, pursuing his duties with an unruffled mien, looked the world in the eye with a cool truculence that soon landed him in a series of *contretemps* from which he emerged a little less beautiful of countenance, but emphatically victorious. For Parker was a "Tommy" of the best fighting quality; as ready with his fists as with his tongue, hard as nails, level-headed, alert, and of the dogged type that fears no foe and never knows when it is beaten. It is this type that has won the little British isles such big slices of the world.

Sir Donald, too, being no stranger to scorching suns and unluxurious methods of life, quickly adopted the look of the land, and might readily have passed for a genuine colonial. He was not new to Australia, having, when stationed in India a dozen years previously, utilised a six months' spell of leave in looking up a younger brother of his who had a cattle run in this very locality. About the time that the eccentric and adventurous Smith set

foot in the Never-Never country, this brother of the General's had died. Sir Donald had, he told me, endeavoured to persuade his widowed sister-in-law to sell the run and leave the Gulf country, but as she and her family liked the place they had stayed on, generally going south in the hot season. Of course, at the Antipodes the further south one goes the cooler it gets.

"The eldest girl," Sir Donald added, "is eighteen, and is called Madge. I'm told she is quite nice-looking, and I'm wondering what her manners are like."

CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCES A FAIR DUELLIST.

I SHALL never forget the first time I caught sight of this young lady. The General, Maitland, Jack, Parker, and myself having bought several horses, chose five of the best, and rode out to Hans Lagoon, where the widow's cattle run was situated. Though open and bare around Burketown, the country was beautifully wooded as we neared the lagoon. Before we got to the station buildings, which were pleasantly placed on slightly rising ground, we heard an odd hubbub ahead. The excited barking of dogs was mingled with pistol-like cracks. We pushed forward, and in the clear space of the bush beheld a remarkable sight. A tall, slim girl, in a white dress, with a stock-whip in her hand, was facing an enormous carpet snake, which was coiled close to a large fallen tree. His big head was raised, and his slender neck was bent into the form of a capital S, the curves lying flat behind the head. His agate-like eyes were instinct with a fiendish intelligence and rage. He must have been fifteen feet long, a more than usually large specimen of this, the larger of the Australian species of the python family. Smaller than the boa constrictor, the Anaconda of America, or the rock snake of India and Java, the carpet snake of Australia and his cousin, the diamond snake, are fairly awkward reptiles to tackle when roused and disposed to show fight. Although not venomous, they have a good set of biting teeth, and once those teeth grip the flesh, the long powerful body writhes round the victim and squeezes the breath out of him with a pressure of mighty strength.

As we rode up, the snake was making ready to strike. The head lay absolutely motionless, but behind it the neck was slowly curving into loop after loop until the loose flat coils represented enough "slack" to enable the head, when shot out, to reach to its object, while yet the lower coils remained firm, held by the grip the end of the tail had on the fallen tree. The blue forked tongue flicked in and out of the closed lips as the head commenced to sway to and fro gently and rhythmically. The lighter-coloured scales along the neck began to glisten, and the dark-mottled pattern on the body, not unlike a Brussels carpet worked out in blotches ranging from dirty yellow to purple-brown, became more vivid as the sweat of anger oozed through the skin.

The girl heard us approach, but did not take her eyes off her enemy.

"Keep back, dogs, keep back!" she said; then, raising her voice, "Keep back on those horses. Can't you see you'll scare him!"

Scare him! Scare that cold, merciless fiend making ready at the moment to strike at her, and grip her to death with those terrible writhing coils! I reined in my horse, fascinated at the spectacle, not able to move my eyes from it, forgetful, even, of the rifle that was slung to my saddle.

The girl stood lithe and willowy, one hand grasping the short eighteen-inch haft of the stock-whip, the long, thin sixteen-foot lash of green hide held in coils between the fingers of her other hand. Her left foot was slightly advanced, and her weight rested on the right. There was a slight flush showing under the tan of her cheeks, and a purposeful determination in her hazel eyes. We realised that Round No. 1 was about to take place, and that the combatants were watching each other for an advantage.

Suddenly the girl raised her right arm and the long lash leaped out and swung round her as she circled the whip-haft over her head. The snake, taking time by the forelock, reared and threw himself at her as might a handrope whirl on a pier when thrown from an incoming ship. Our hearts stood still, and I heard Maitland give a cry of alarm. But the girl saw the snake coming, and sprang to one side; then, turning, her arm went up sharply, the long coil straightened out behind her; there was a quick forward motion of the wrist, and down came the lash like a living thing. It cracked like a pistol shot, and we could see a quiver run through the frame of the huge reptile as he winced under the blow. In a minute he had recovered, and gathered himself up as before to await Round No. 2.

Evidently Miss Madge did not believe in the rules of Queensberry when fighting snakes, for she gave him no time to recover from his

discomfiture. Up went her lithe arm again, back flew the green hide, and with a sharp, determined, downward motion which brought it up with a jerk, the lash was at its limit, and again a sharp report rang out right over the head of the enemy. She had missed his neck by a bare inch.

He took the insult fairly well, though his eyes absolutely scintillated with fury. If he could only throw himself more than half his own length—which is a snake's limit—he would have this slip of a girl in a trice!

No one dared speak. The girl and the snake were watching each other like two gladiators. It was Round No. 3, and a fight to a finish. Which of them would make the first move?

A dog precipitated matters. It rushed in upon the serpent, the latter made a lunge at him, and the dog only escaped by the merest fluke. A cut from the whip sent him yelping away to safety.

The Diana-like maid of the Bush had hardly drawn back the lash before the snake recovered himself and struck at her again. Too much to the right this time, but he coiled back like lightning and prepared for another spring. Palpably he was getting aggressive now and wanted stopping. With a firm up-stroke of the hand over the right shoulder, the green hide flew out to its full length. Then, with a forward and downward swing, out went the thong of the whip. This time the end of the lash caught the snake full on the throat, and it fell back with a broken neck—a bullet from the General's revolver putting an end to its contortions.

It had been a plucky tussle, and this time the woman had prevailed over her traditional enemy.

"Bravo!" cried Sir Donald, lapsing from his usual dignified bearing, and waving his hat wildly; "well done, my dear young lady. That was as good a fight as I ever saw in my life."

She looked up at him quickly. It was a striking face, slightly flushed as it was with the excitement of the moment. It would have monopolised our attention had not something happened to distract us. Maitland had dismounted, and was leaning against his horse with a very white face.

"Hullo there," cried the General, sharply, but not unkindly, "what's the matter with you? You're surely not going to faint? Give him a drink out of your water-bottle, doctor."

But I was too late, and had it not been for the girl herself, who caught the reeling tutor by the shoulder and steadied him in a very business-like way, he would have fallen. He came round quickly, although he was white to the lips.

The girl gazed curiously at the Oxonian, and then, turning away from him, looked at the General. Sir Donald caught her by the shoulders, and gazed intently at her as he held her at arm's length.

"I see my brother's face in yours. You are my niece, Madge Taylor, are you not?" he cried.

"Why, you are my Uncle Donald!" she exclaimed, and kissed his sunburnt cheek. "Fancy! We didn't expect you for days. Why didn't you send on word you were coming? Are these all your sons? I thought there was only one."

Her eyes settled on me with so much quizzical mischief in them that I laughed outright.

"My sons! My dear Madge—that's my old regimental sawbones. My son! What next indeed! Why, Payne's as old a man as I am. Good gracious me! That's my son there—don't laugh at your father, sir—that's Jack, and this is Mr. Maitland, Jack's tutor, who is going to make a man of him."

"Is he?" The delightful inflexion of the girl's voice as she bowed gravely to the pallid Maitland was perfect. She looked away from him to Parker, who had walked over to the dead snake, and was turning it over with his foot.

"And that?"

"That's my servant Parker," the General answered curtly.

"Knows a horse when he sees it, I'll bet, and can use his hands a bit, too, I should say," Madge remarked.

I saw the General's brows contract. His niece was puzzling him somewhat.

"Well, what do you say to coming up to the house? It's close up time for tucker, and mother will be no end struck on seeing you," she went on easily.

She turned and caught her horse, which had been quietly standing in the shade of a tree. Jack sprang forward to help her, but before he could get up to her she was in the saddle, Parker standing open-mouthed in admiration and astonishment.

"Hurry up!" she called out, and as we mounted she shook her bridle, and her horse went off at a hand gallop, setting us a pace that tried poor Maitland's horsemanship sorely, for the route lay through the bush, over logs and ant-hills, and between trees, until every moment I expected to see the scholar's saddle empty.

CHAPTER IV.

WE MAKE AN ENEMY.

THE station homestead was a long low house with deep verandahs, shaded by picturesque, graceful palms and tall trees, from which trailed magnificent passion vines ablaze with scarlet, white, and purple blossoms.

We were led under a deep, cool verandah with a bark roof, and there we found the General's sister-in-law, Mrs. Taylor, widow of his late brother, and Madge's mother. She looked what she was—a woman of refinement and capacity for work, one who in a new country had taken the rough state of affairs as a matter of course, who had not sat still and sighed for comfort and luxury left behind in a distant land, but had courageously tackled the work around like a true gentlewoman. She had made order out of chaos, and a beautiful home with most of its comforts, and even luxuries, out in the wilderness. Truly Providence helps those who help themselves.

She welcomed us in a way that made us feel at home at once. Besides Madge there were two other girls, who would soon be going down to Sydney to school. The oldest of the family, a boy, was away there at the University. Mrs. Taylor, like her daughter Madge, had a passion for the bush, and all the many wonderful things it contained. So far as Madge was concerned, she knew infinitely more remarkable truths about it than the many naturalists who peep into it, and then go away to write a book about it.

After lunch the General and I sat with Mrs. Taylor on the verandah while Jack and Maitland strolled away to examine the many novelties, to their eyes, in the garden round the house. Presently the General caught sight of Madge, with a bridle dangling over her shoulder, disappearing into the bush.

"Good gracious me!" he exclaimed. "There's Madge going off by herself."

Mrs. Taylor glanced round.

"She's off to the paddock to catch a horse, I expect."

THE LONG LASH LEAPED OUT AND SWUNG ROUND HER AS SHE CIRCLED THE WHIP-HAFT OVER HER HEAD.

"To catch a horse? Haven't you a man about the place to do that for her?" he demanded.

"Oh, you don't understand our bush ways yet, Donald," she answered, laughing. "We prefer to do things for ourselves rather than be waited on."

"Bush ways or not," returned the General, brusquely, "I cannot see her go off by herself like that when there is a man about the place to catch her horse for her. Here, Parker!" he shouted as he saw the ex-cavalry trooper loitering among the palms.

Parker came up at a trot.

"Miss Madge has gone over there to catch a horse. Double after her and catch it for her," the General said, and Parker turned on his heel and set off at a trot towards the point indicated.

So it was that there came to my ears the story of Parker's first adventure in the bush, and of his first meeting with one who was to play no unimportant part in our experience during the next few months. Reconstructing the incident and putting the details in their proper order, the story is as follows:

Madge had taken her bridle and set off to a paddock that lay about half a mile from the station buildings in order to get her favourite horse, Barney, a half unbroken thoroughbred that would allow no one else to approach him. It was her intention to ride halfway back to Burketown with us in the evening—that was to say, if we insisted on going back. She had taken a short cut where a track led through a thick clump of wattle, and had nearly reached the paddock, when, noiselessly as a shadow, a thick-set and evil-looking blackfellow, wearing only a dingy pair of moleskins, came in front of her. In one hand he held a short thick club called a nullah-nullah. His forehead was low and receding, his nose broad with wide nostrils like the tops of air-shafts looking to the front, and his mouth big and thick-lipped, all significant of his primitive warrior and hunter instincts.

"Hello, Crocodile," said the girl, "I thought you'd gone back to the bush again. What you want here?"

"Me wantum that one yaraman, horse. Gif me bridle," he demanded insolently.

"All right," said Madge with apparent indifference; "supposing you catch and ride my horse, me gif him you."

The blackfellow snatched the bridle from her.

Barney, hearing her voice, had come up to the slip-rails, and now stood with his head over them, his ears pricked up and his eyes showing the white freely as he snorted at the blackfellow, who, like all his race, shed a subtle musky aroma around him. While the blackfellow crept through the fence, the horse stood quite still save for a restless tossing of his head. Pausing for a moment to sort the bridle, Crocodile passed, as he thought, out of the range of Barney's eyes and turned in his stride so as to come up under the horse's flank. He had come near enough to reach out his hand ready to grasp Barney by the mane, when that astute animal expressed his views on the subject. With a propping jump on his forelegs and a swing of his hind quarters, Barney had his victim well within reach of a lashing kick. The black, intent only on the movements of the horse's head, took a step forward; the off-side hind leg shot out and Crocodile measured his length on the ground.

Scrambling to his feet he shouted out: "Baal that fellow no good; my word, me plenty soon gif it what about."

Madge, leaning on the slip-rails, warned him to be careful, and Parker, who had come up, stood in the shade of a thick-growing wattle, awaiting developments.

They arrived rapidly. Crocodile made a rush at the horse, and was again caught by a flying hoof, which struck him fairly in the chest. While it added to his anger, this second reverse caused him to fall back on his native cunning to secure the prize he coveted. Keeping his face towards the horse, he moved sideways and backwards, circling round and round the animal, which, recognising the game, kept slowly revolving also. But with every circle Crocodile gained a few inches and was so much nearer the heavy black mane. Barney contented himself with curveting until the blackfellow was within three yards of him; then he began to show what he could do. Pig-jumps, props and buck-jumps he performed with ease and rapidity, and the flash of his hind hoofs as he occasionally let fly made his would-be captor move warily. Still keeping to his slow circling movements, Crocodile was nursing his wrath until he could get the horse in his power. But Barney soon grew tired of the game. He planted his feet firmly, neighed, swished his long tail, and, from the security of his position, turned his neck back and looked his pursuer fairly in the face. Crocodile stood rigid, never a muscle quivering. For nearly a minute they stood so, eyeing one another. Then Barney tossed his head and, with a bounding leap only possible to an agile black in the pink of physical condition, Crocodile was beside him, had gripped a handful of the flowing mane and vaulted clean on to the horse's back.

Detailing the incident to me afterwards, Parker waxed enthusiastic.

"Never see sich a show, sir," he said. "Talk of the Hagricultural 'All and them Harab fuzzy-wuzzies for 'orsemanship, my, they

couldn't 'old a bean to it nohow. That nigger jumped a clear ten foot long and four 'igh to get the 'orse the way 'e did. Hathelete? Why, 'e was a regular gymkhana and ridin' school rolled into one, 'e was. I 'ardly minded wot 'appened after, seeing how I'd seen 'im do that jump."

It was a handsome compliment, for what happened after left several substantial marks of evidence upon the Parker anatomy. But I must not anticipate.

strained and ached and the breath was jerked from his body. No man, with saddle and bridle to help him, could sit Barney when he bucked; with neither saddle nor bridle, Crocodile was like a barnacle on a lashing whale's tail. Something had to go, and Barney was clear on the point that he was not the something.

He worked gradually nearer the slip-rails, over which his mistress was leaning and laughing in her enjoyment of his exhibition

"WHAT YOU WANT HERE?" SAID THE GIRL.

The blackfellow was no sooner astride than he swung the bridle round his head and brought it down, bit-end outwards, across the glossy flank of Barney. The horse could scarcely have realised that the man was on his back when he felt that vicious blow. It was injury and insult rolled into one and anything but the game as it ought to be played. Barney replied on the moment. His head went down between his forelegs, his back rose in a beautiful arch, he sprang off the ground straight into the air and then, as his hoofs touched the earth again, he jumped from side to side, twisting, plunging, propping, until the black gripped the mane with both his hands and held on with knees and legs until his muscles

of prowess. He measured the distance between himself and the three sapling-rails. Then he reared, right up on his hind legs, with his forelegs pawing the air, while the unhappy Crocodile felt as though he had been suddenly picked up out of a boat pitching and rolling in a heavy cross sea and set to climb a very awkward slippery tree. He only had time to feel it. Barney came down on his forelegs, let out with both hind legs as he humped up his back, and the helpless Crocodile was shot, like a stone from a sling, straight at the sapling-rails. He crashed into them and sent them to splinters as he rolled over, a limp specimen of black humanity, at the feet of Barney's mistress.

No white man could have survived that smash, but a black, like a cat, takes a lot of killing. As Barney galloped off round the paddock, Crocodile staggered to his feet. He saw Madge shaking with laughter. It was his turn to experience the addition of insult to injury.

"Baal you catch um that horse," the girl cried. "You gif it me bridle."

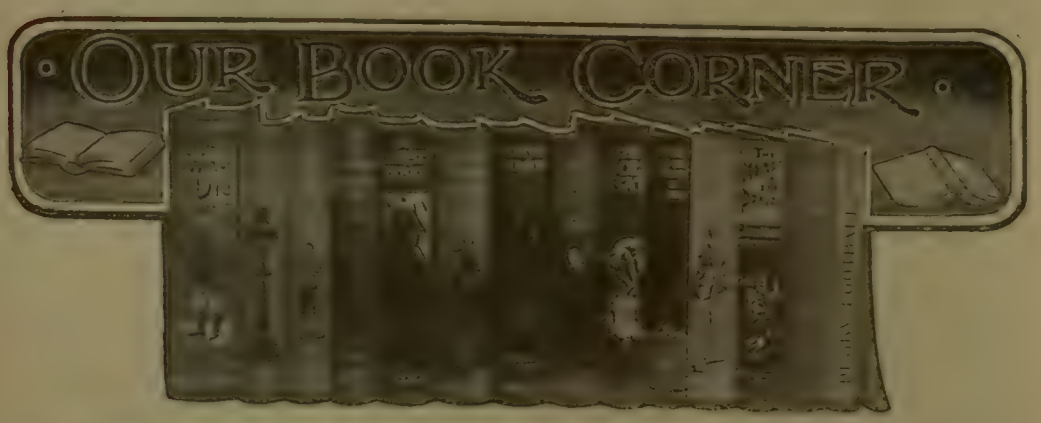
Crocodile gave one ugly look into her eyes, muttered a deep imprecation in his own tongue, and sprang at the girl. He seized her round the waist with his sinewy arms and swung her off her feet as though to dash her to the ground. Then Parker took a hand.

A well-placed left under the jaw and a right on the lower ribs, caused Crocodile's arms to lose their tension for a moment. Madge, angry but self-possessed, freed herself and stood back.

Crocodile, his eyes glistening beneath his low scowling brows, his white teeth showing as his lips parted in his gasps, his ugly nostrils quivering, stood facing Parker, with vicious intent showing in every feature. The Cockney trooper, with one quick glance into Madge's face, squared up to his coloured foe, his weight thrown forward ready for a back spring, his arms ready to fight or wrestle, and his eyes alert for either a blow, a trip, a grip, or a kick.

The black's eyes blinked for a second, and Madge reached for a short length of the splintered rail. Then, with a wild war yell, Crocodile sprang at Parker.

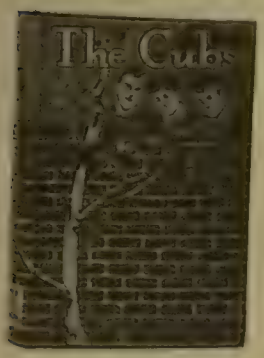
(To be continued.)



The Cubs. By Shan F. Bullock.—(T. Werner Laurie. 6s.)—There is no mawkish sentimentality in Mr. Bullock's vivid picture of life in an Irish private school. The author is under no illusions about boys. He has sympathy with them; he understands them; and he observes that "most of them are cruel, many are brutal, and he spoke truth who called them all barbarians." A remark of that kind is likely to shock those good people who form their notions of boys from the conventional types presented in "school stories" of the common or sugary order, instead of from the real live article; but it is true, nevertheless. Thalma is the name of the Irish school depicted in "The Cubs," and though things happen there which may cause an English public schoolman politely to raise his eyebrows, the picture is drawn with a sure hand and carries conviction. The boys of Thalma, Cubs and all, are truly barbarians, but they are also—boys. They behave like boys, they speak like boys, they have the minds of boys. They live.

There is little plot to the story, and the incidents which develop it are unremarkable. The charm of the book lies in the skilful delineation of character which it contains. We do not remember ever to have met a bully who so compelled our interest as the cold-visaged, snarling Burke, or one whose peculiar point of view was presented to us with so much sympathy and force. The Cubs themselves are a couple of roaring blades, to whom, for the sake of their wit, we would forgive a hundred misdeeds. Irresistibly they remind us of the famous Stalky and Co., though if we make comparison between the two crea-

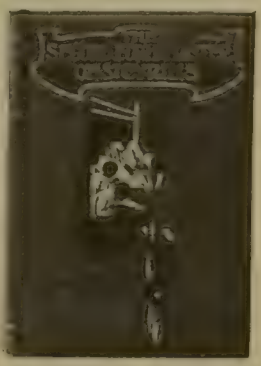
tions, it is to give Mr. Bullock the high praise of preferring his pair of natural young ruffians to Mr. Kipling's somewhat freakish three. Jan himself, in whose mouth the narrative of the book is placed, stands out as a fine analysis of the high-spirited, sturdy, yet emotional Irish boy.



Whether "The Cubs" contains enough incident, or incident of a sufficiently exciting nature, to satisfy the rather melodramatic tastes in fiction of, say, the Fourth Form, we are not sure. But to the reader capable of literary discrimination, Mr. Bullock's story comes as a welcome relief from the dreary sameness of the average school tale. It is matter for great regret that in the literary market the supply of wares of this kind should be left almost entirely in the hands of writers who may be capable craftsmen (though not always that), but are seldom artists.

The Second Form Master of St. Cyril's. By H. Escott-Inman.—(F. Warne and Co. *3s 6d.*)—This is a book that will delight the heart of Aunt Matilda. Such irreproachable "tone," such unexampled high-falutin'! Nothing could be more suitable for little Harry's Christmas present. The experienced reader, encountering on the first page "a tall, somewhat slenderly built lad of fifteen, with handsome, sensitive features—a proud-looking boy, and rather pale," and, a few lines later, "a little fellow, flushed with excitement," will know only too well what to expect. He has met them before, those "lads" (they are never boys) with handsome sensitive features, and those "little fellows" who are always flushed with excitement. The former (after clenching his fists and making his eyes flash) will thrash the bully, and the latter will be rescued (in the nick of time) from a runaway horse or a mad bull or an express steam-roller or something of the kind, by the misunderstood and much-put-upon usher.

"The Second Form Master of St. Cyril's" will not be found wanting in the fulfilment of these expectations. It belongs to the lengthy category of highly orthodox "school stories," and contains the customary ingredients. The usual acts of heroism are performed, and the usual noble sentiments uttered by the usual assemblage of prigs, who talk and behave in the usual preposterous fashion. Need we add that the captain of the school has a high sense of duty, and that the bully, after getting into the clutches of a "horsey-looking" bookmaker (in a loud check suit), commits thefts which are fastened on to some one else?



At the same time, it is just to remark that the author has shown considerable ingenuity in the weaving of his plot. Incident succeeds incident rapidly, the story being gradually worked up to an interesting climax, though the fact that the reader has been allowed behind the scenes, and, knowing what the result must inevitably be, has only curiosity to see how that end is reached, rather spoils the situation. The fault of the book lies in the absurdity of its central theme, its lack of characterisation, and its utter falsity as a picture of school life. The "scholars" of St. Cyril's are (thank goodness) like no boys that ever went to an English school; nor, indeed, like any that we ever met or heard of. If they be, of a verity, drawn from observation, we do not envy the author his circle of youthful acquaintance.

The Black Fifteen. By W. E. Cule.—(Melrose, *2s. 6d.*)—These short stories—eighteen in all—are curiously unequal in merit.

Some are happy (the author having hit on a good idea and finding inspiration in the elaboration of it), others are indifferent, while one or two are frankly futile and miss fire altogether. In several an effort has been made to introduce a novel psychological element, but the attempt being half-hearted only, the result is not very successful. Occasionally, indeed, it becomes ludicrous, as in "The Strange Case of Clarkson," where a photographic enlargement of the undesirable Benskin's portrait exercises, after its original has left, a malign hypnotic influence upon the weak and foolish Clarkson. The mesmeric spell is only broken by the smashing of the

picture and the substitution of a portrait of Gladstone, under the influence of which the victim is at once reformed and develops into a red-hot Radical politician! The underlying suggestion in "The Great Grogan's Bat," which tells of a wonderful innings played by a nervous cricketer (of the type which never does itself justice in matches), with the bat of a departed school hero, is more feasible, and is well worked out.

There is real humour and true observation in the story of "The Great Politeness Craze," while "That Luffingham Affair," which recounts the adventures of the St. Martin's XI. (why, incidentally, should most schools of fiction be dedicated to a saint?) in a match against the team of a private lunatic asylum, is amusing, albeit the central idea is somewhat hackneyed.

Mr. Cule is not ambitious, and his collection of stories, taken as a whole, achieves its purpose well enough. It is a pity, however, that now and then he should have yielded to the temptation to press home an obvious moral. In every case where he adds a homily, his end would have been far better served by leaving the reader to perceive for himself the inward significance of the tale. No one likes to be preached at, still less to have his intelligence underrated.

Clive of Clair College. By J. Harwood Panting.—(F. Warne and Co. 3*s.* 6*d.*)—The hero of Mr. Panting's story is a small boy who performs prodigies of valour in aiding and abetting the flight from trial of an Old Boy of his school, who has been accused (wrongly, of course) of the murder of the young squire. If we add that the fugitive is in love with the Head's daughter ("a sweet, pure type of English womanhood of about twenty"), that others of the *dramatis personæ* include a peppery squire, a brutal estate-steward, and a village loony, it will at once be seen that things are bound to become beautifully mixed. The discerning reader will speedily suspect Daft Dick of being the eventual *deus ex machina*, and when he learns that the latter is the secret tenant of one of those underground caves with which the neighbourhood of the traditional school of fiction is so frequently (and conveniently) honey-combed, his suspicions will harden into conviction.

Despite the wild improbabilities of the plot, the tale gallops along at a capital pace. The long arm of coincidence is certainly stretched to attenuation, but much may be forgiven to an author who keeps the ball rolling briskly, and Mr. Panting certainly contrives to hold the attention. It cannot be said that any of the characters arouses sympathy, or even interest, but curiosity is awakened, and the reader is impelled to hurry from chapter to chapter in the desire to learn how matters are going to end. Books of the kind to which Mr. Panting's story belongs do not inspire to a very high standard of literary merit; but judged in its own class, "Clive of Clair College" may be pronounced as good as most, and better than many.

Time was when Mr. Harwood Panting wrote pretty and touching comedy stories, of very different manufacture from the work under notice. Perhaps, some day, when the gods permit, he will return to his old love.

Love Among the Chickens. By P. G. Wodehouse.—(G. Newnes, Ltd., 6*s.*)—A most laughable story by this popular "Captain" author. It relates how an eccentric and amusing fellow named S. F. Ukridge endeavoured to earn a living by running a poultry farm in Devonshire, the result being chronicled by his friend Garnet, a young author who is the hero of a love-story which is skilfully interwoven with Mr. Ukridge's adventures. The book is redolent of fresh air and light-heartedness, and there is no reason why any Captainite who gets hold of it should not, during the next few hours, be as happy as a king—or, from what we know of kings, a good deal happier.

We have also received copies of the following: *Loyal and True.* By H. Escott-Inman. (F. Warne and Co. 3*s.* 6*d.*). *The Butterflies of the British Isles.* By Richard South, F.E.S. (F. Warne and Co. 6*s.* net). *The British Motor Tourist's A.B.C.* (The New Alphabetic Press, Ltd. 5*s.*) *British Flowering Plants.* By W. F. Kirby, F.L.S., F.E.S. (Sidney Appleton. 5*s.* net). *Cricket Guide and How to Play Cricket.* By Prince Ranjitsinhji. *Base Ball Guide.* Edited by Henry Chadwick (British Sports Publishing Co., Ltd. 6*d.* net.) *Simple Forge Work.* By H. J. S. Cassal. (L. Upcott Gill. 1*s.* net.) *East Lynne.* By Mrs. Henry Wood. *Cranford.* By Mrs. Gaskell. (Nelson's Sixpenny Classics.) *How to Shave Yourself.* By an Expert. (Van, Alexander and Co. 6*d.* net.) *Highways and Byways in Dorset.* By Sir Frederick Treves. (Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 6*s.*) *The Book of the V.C.* By A. L. Haydon. (Andrew Melrose. 3*s.* 6*d.*)

"TOO MUCH OF A JOKE"

AN "OLD BOY'S" TALE.

BY

ARTHUR STANLEY.

LIKE most old Graftonians, I was not at all pleased with the governors for placing the responsibilities of a new Head on young shoulders. Not that we really had any grounds for our prejudice against the Rev. Stephen Thane, M.A., who could hardly help being young, and was curing himself of the fault with all possible rapidity. But, in the first place, he was not an old Graftonian himself. That was scarcely pardonable. Again, he disliked "Rugger," and wanted Grafton—so it was rumoured—to abandon the game in favour of "Soccer." That was the last straw, and we were all convinced that the new Head was not the right man for Grafton. So much for old Graftonians, as a body. I myself had a personal grievance with regard to Mr. Thane that overshadowed every other consideration.

I was aware that my sister Claire, who was an "undergraduatess" at Nyneham, was certainly the cleverest and prettiest and best little girl in the world, but I strongly objected to the Rev. Stephen Thane, M.A., presuming to share my views on the subject. Not that I had any solid reason for supposing that he did—but when a young, and possibly attractive, Cambridge don, who has the luck to be a lecturer at Nyneham, happens to turn up at an obscure village where one of his prettiest disciples is staying, and says that he *was* cycling to Scotland but that the said obscure village seemed to knock Scotland into a cocked hat (or uses words to that effect)—it certainly looks suspicious.

I had never seen the new Head, and he had never seen me. Perhaps, if he had, he would not have been so anxious to become my brother-in-law. Of course, it was fine to think of little Claire as the wife of the Headmaster of Grafton—but he wasn't an O. G., he didn't like "Rugger," home would be rotten if Claire left it for ever, and the whole affair was an awful bore.

On the second day of Thane's first term at Grafton, I took a day off and journeyed to the old place, with the object of finding out first hand what I thought of the fellow. In the train I almost felt inclined to be horribly rude to him when we met—so rude, in fact, that he would hate me and all my relatives like poison. But when I arrived at the school I forgot the new Head for some minutes. I had not been to the place since I left it five years since, and I became a prey to the usual sensations of melancholy at finding myself a stranger amidst scenes so familiar. There was not an inch of the floor or the walls that did not seem to bear some mark I could recognise, yet there was none to welcome me, none except old Tagg!

Old Tagg still sat at his table in the porter's little room, but even he seemed more like a part of the building than a human being. One recognised him with much the same sensations as those with which one recognised the large knot in the floor just outside the fourth form room, or the chip in the left ear of the bust of Homer in the hall.

"Didjew say as 'ow you wanted a cane, sir?" said Tagg. This was an immemorial joke of his. He asked the same question of every "old boy" who ever crossed the threshold of his small apartment. I laughed heartily, and the ancient wag was mightily pleased both with me and with himself.

"Ah, Tagg!" I sighed. "The new Head will soon do away with corporal punishment!"

(Before the morning was out, I had reason to wish most sincerely that he had already completed that reform!)

"*I'm* sure!" assented Tagg. "'E'll make 'em stand in the corner!"

There was a school cap—lost property, most likely, waiting to be claimed—lying on Tagg's table. It looked fairly new and clean, and I yielded to an impulse that came to me to put it on my head.

"Why, you ain't 'ardly altered a bit, sir!" exclaimed Tagg. "It looks like old times, don't it?"

"And feels like it," I answered, surveying the reflection of myself in the glass panel of the door. Then I walked out towards the main entrance.

"Where are you a-goin', sir?"

"Going for a stroll in this cap," I replied. "I like the feeling of it."

I strolled out into the sunlit quadrangle, and, after awhile, seated myself in one of the cloister "windows." Possibly this is not the correct term, but it was what we Graftonians always called them. I felt more like a happy boy again, so I lit a pipe and smoked contentedly. There was still something wanting. What was it that still made me feel "out of the picture"?—as our good friends, the dramatic critics, would say. For one thing, I was out in the sunshine whilst all the real Graftonians were in school. I could not very well alter that. For another thing, I was smoking a pipe—and I would not alter that! So I contented myself with soliloquies proper to the occasion, and I was astonished at the multitude of trifling incidents I could remember when my eye lighted on the spots where they occurred. I looked at the gate, and thought—at least, I was just beginning to think, when a thick-set figure in cap and gown came striding through. At that moment I really did forget that I was a free, independent "Old Boy," and, seized with a sudden panic, I flung myself down into the shelter of the cloisters. As I did so, however, in my confusion, I let my pipe drop on the outer side. I crouched down, heartily ashamed of my clumsiness, but feeling intensely amused at the situation. I could now hear footsteps drawing near, and had little doubt that the master had noticed my pipe! I crawled away from my original "window" as quickly as my somewhat compressed condition would allow, keeping close to the wall. I was genuinely anxious to escape detection, as it is hardly the best of form for an Old Boy to smoke on the school premises during the term.

Suddenly a huge voice roared out:

"Come out—you—there—that boy. Come out at once!"

I came out at once. The figure in the gown was that of a square-jawed, clean-shaven man of not more than two-and-thirty. I felt certain that the square jaw belonged to the new Head. He had my pipe in his hand as I approached him, and I shall never forget the look of absolute disgust with which he examined it.

"I beg your pardon, sir!" I said with all the calmness I could command. "That is my pipe. I dropped it accidentally a minute ago!"

The Rev. Stephen Thane looked me in the face, and I thanked my stars that I was not the impudent boy I was pretending to be. He seemed quite a decent fellow, but I thought of Claire, and of the Rugger, and I felt that it would be pure bliss to rag him for a minute or two.

"I do not think you quite understand, sir," I said, after a short silence. "That pipe belongs to me. May I trouble you for it, or would you care to toss for it?"

"What is your name?" asked the Head calmly.

"Smith," I replied.

"And your form?"

"The Sixth Modern, Mr. Thane."

"Well, Smith, what right have you to be out of your class-room?"

"I hold, sir, that class-rooms should always be ignored in fine weather," I answered with a smile. "That is just where our educational systems——"

"Stop this foolery, Smith," snapped the Head, in a way that made me feel a trifle uncomfortable, in spite of my sense of security, "and come with me to the library!"

I assumed a crestfallen air, and slunk after the Head into the school building. I sincerely hoped now that we should not meet any one who recognised me. It would spoil one of the grandest jokes I had ever heard of, and certainly the funniest episode in my life.

In the entrance hall, the Head came to a sudden stop.

"Tagg!" he shouted.

The old porter hobbled out of his room and came up to us. He stared at me in some astonishment, and I winked at him.

"Tagg," said the Head, "go to Mr. Somers, give him my compliments, and ask

"I BEG YOUR PARDON, SIR, THAT IS MY PIPE!"

him if he can spare Prentice and MacQueen for a few minutes."

Prentice and MacQueen! So there were at least two fellows in the school who would remember me! And with very good reason, too! Almost my last act before leaving school had been to give those two young beggars the soundest thrashing they ever had in their lives!

"And tell them," continued the Head, "to come to the library and bring a cane with them!"

A minute afterwards the Head and I were alone in the library. His looks and movements were those of a man who has made up his mind to take a strong line of action. He took off his cap and gown and buttoned up his coat. He then placed a chair in the centre of the room. I sat down upon it.

"Get up, sir!" he thundered.

"I beg your pardon," I replied, rising. "I thought you put it there for me!"

"So I did!" said he grimly. "I shall ask you to—er—avail yourself of it in a few minutes. In the meantime you will oblige me by remaining standing."

The Head sat down in his arm-chair and glared at me so ferociously that I grinned.

"I thought, Smith," he said bitterly, "that all the fellows at Grafton were gentlemen!"

"I sincerely hope they are!" I answered.

"I am sorry to have found an exception so soon!" was his rejoinder.

"Prentice and MacQueen," I replied loftily, "are not bad fellows at heart, but they have rather frequent lapses. I am not aware of the nature of their latest misdemeanour, but I feel sure that you are right in taking a very strong line in the matter."

"You don't understand," said the Head with a grim smile. "I'm going to thrash *you*, Smith!"

"Oh? Then Prentice and MacQueen are to be our seconds, I presume?"

At that moment the door opened and the two youths in question entered the library. They had developed into strapping lads, each one capable of tackling me with one hand tied behind his back. When I left school their heads had been just about on a level with that part of my anatomy known as the "wind." Now it was the other way about. They both recognised me, and I managed to wink surreptitiously at them. Their faces, however, remained as expressionless as those of graven images.

"Thank you," said the Head, taking the cane that MacQueen had brought in with him. "Now, Smith."

The time was now ripe, I conceived, to expose the nature of my little joke.

"Mr. Thane," I said, "there has been a slight misunderstanding. I am to blame, I admit, but——"

The Head bent the cane backwards and forwards impatiently. "Do your duty!" he cried to the prefects.

The two louts rushed at me, leering vindictively. They had neither of them forgiven or forgotten me. I fought madly for a second or two, for my blood was up.

I GOT A SHARP CUT ACROSS THE SHOULDERS.

"Send these young brutes away," I yelled, "and I'll explain. I—I—left school five years ago!"

"Don't you believe him, sir," panted MacQueen. "He's trying to take you in, sir."

The young ruffians were gradually overpowering me, and I was beginning to enjoy my little joke a great deal less. There was a slight pause in the struggle, for we were all three out of breath.

"You've got to have it, Smith," said the Head calmly. "You are pitiably childish."

"If you only knew how extremely irregular"——I began.

"Quite so," responded the Head. "But your conduct has been irregular—outrageously so!"

The two young ruffians now made another onslaught, and this time they soon got the upper hand of me.

"I tell you—I've LEFT, Mr. Thane!" I screamed out desperately.

"You *are* a liar, Smith," shouted MacQueen.

"Liar!" echoed Prentice. The righteous indignation of these two was really excellently feigned. If the young scoundrels do not drift on to the variety stage when they leave Grafton, I shall be surprised. I still fought wildly, and yelled incoherent explanations and apologies to Mr. Thane, but my two ruthless enemies persistently denounced me as a hopeless prevaricator and a "rotten funk." Their clamour drowned my words as effectually as their united strength was fast overcoming my resistance.

Just as I thought I was in for a sound licking, with a sudden wrench I managed to get my right arm free. I saw Prentice's triumphant, perspiring face before me, and I hit out at it savagely. My fist got home—to my intense delight—right on the point of the fellow's jaw. He swayed for a couple of seconds, and then fell to the floor. The next moment MacQueen and I were grappling with each other. I managed to trip him and we came a cropper together. Unfortunately I was uppermost when we fell, and the Head so far forgot the dignity of his position as to take advantage of mine. In fact, as soon as MacQueen went

down on his back, the cane descended twice, and each time I got a sharp cut across the shoulders.

I must have been possessed of ten times my usual strength at that moment, for I tore myself from my enemy's arms, and, before I knew what I was doing, I had leaped to my feet and snatched the cane from the Head's grasp. I believe I should have actually hit *him* with it then, had not the door of the room burst open and old Tagg rushed in, looking the very picture of scandalised astonishment.

"Mr. Cameron!" he shouted in alarm, "what are you a-doin' of?"

I dropped the cane.

"*Cameron!*" gasped the Head.

"Yes!" I shrieked. "You know me, Tagg, don't you? Tell him it's true that I've left, for goodness' sake!"

"It's perfectly true, sir!" replied Tagg excitedly. "Mr. Cameron left Grafton five years ago come Christmas!"

The Head turned fiercely to the two prefects. Prentice was, by this time, recovering from the effects of the crack on the jaw I had given him.

"Then what do you two boys mean by telling me that it wasn't true, when Mr. Cameron said that he had left?" he thundered.

They had nothing to say for themselves, of course.

The Head picked up his cane, and each of the louts had to take six of the very hottest before they were allowed to depart.

"Well, Mr. Cameron," said the Head, when we were once more left to ourselves, "so you were merely trying to have a little joke with me, eh?"

I assented apologetically.

"Don't you think it was a bit too much of a little joke, eh?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered; "so was your cane!"

We both laughed heartily and shook hands. In a few minutes we were strolling across the playing fields to the Head's house, whither I had been invited to luncheon.

"Have a cigar," said my host. "The fellows won't be out for half an hour, so I shan't get caught."

We strolled along for a few minutes in silence, our cigars doing duty for the "pipe of peace."

"And how *is* Miss Cameron?" asked the Head, doing his level best to appear unconcerned when I mentioned Claire to him.

I replied that she was very fit, and that she wished to be remembered to him.

"Do you know," he laughed, "I was certain your face was familiar to me, or I might have believed you when you said you had left. I thought you were a Graftonian. One can't learn 'Five hundred faces, and all so strange,' in two days, you know!"

"By the way," I said, "I shall not breathe a word of this affair to Claire!"

"Why?" he asked. "I don't mind."

"But I do. You must admit it made me look a most awful ass. I hope you will never tell my sister."

"I give you my word," he answered. "Although I don't think there should ever be secrets between—er—er—real friends, you know!"

"Then!" I said, "there should be no secrets between *us*."

"What do you mean?" he asked rather sharply.

"I mean that, between you and me, I think my sister Claire is the best and prettiest little girl alive!"

"So do I!" he answered manfully.

And I believe he will become quite enthusiastic about Rugger when he knows the game better.

ENGLISH AS SHE IS WROTE.

PLESE send me a feu blowses larger size thin this it is to smorl gust rite in lenth but to smorl acrass the harm at the top but rite lengh in the harm I Want them to faston down the frunt i Won't soil them. i ham sorry you carnt ablige me i thought With that bing a mess fitt i Mite beale to get one & send the others strait back as I cannot come and pick one ontil Sataday as i have the shop & yard to look after i like the one all rite but it is to smorl.—A customer's order; quoted in *The Draper's Record*.

The Olympian Games: Ancient and Modern.

A CONTRAST.

By A. E. JOHNSON.

Illustrated from photos. specially taken for "The Captain" by the Author.

IN the spring of this year it was my business to attend the Games which were held in Athens to celebrate the second Olympiad of modern times. I formed one of the immense cosmopolitan crowd which filled the city to overflowing. I walked in the gaily decorated streets and heard the tongues of all Europe spoken round me. I was a witness of all the varied contests which were included in the programme of the great international meeting. I saw the swimmers and the oarsmen strive in the bay of Phaleron; the swordsmen fight with blunted steel in the open court of the Zappeion; the marksmen shoot at the butts of Kallithea. Day by day I took my place in the huge marble Stadion, and watched the athletes of half a score of countries run and wrestle and jump, hurl the spear or throw the disc, under the eyes of monarchs and of a brilliant concourse—sixty thousand onlookers and more—which filled the vast amphitheatre from its lowest to its topmost tier. I was present at the finish of the famous Marathon race, when the waiting thousands leaped to their feet, as one man, and with thunderous roar acclaimed the victor as he entered the arena. I enjoyed a lively vision of a spectacle both remarkable and splendid: of an athletic "meeting" unexampled and unique. Had I been a modern Greek, impetuous and enthu-

THE THRESHOLD OF THE COURSE.

To the right is seen the end of the secret passage, or tunnel, through which the athletes, umpires, and heralds entered the Stadion. Under the trees can be seen fragments of the sill from which the start of a race was made.

THE STARTING-SILL.

The starting-place is the only part of the Stadion which has been cleared by the excavators. The main part of the arena is still covered in. At a point, however, distant from the starting-place the approximate length of an Olympic stade, a trench was cut, and the limestone sill at the other end of the course laid bare. Grooves were cut in this sill to afford a purchase to the naked runners' toes.

siastic, I might have been tempted to cry aloud that Greece had entered into her own once more, and that the glory which had departed was come again.

A few weeks afterwards I sat beneath the hill of Kronos, upon the open site where once the stately city of Olympia rose. I rested by a prostrate pillar of the great Temple of Zeus, and gazed upon the silent relics, lying round me, of a civilisation which gave to Greece a name that will endure through all the ages. The scene was one to stir the most sluggish imagination, and in fancy I saw before me the pageant of past days, when Greeks of every race flocked from far and near to witness, or take part in, those sacred games which tradition said the mighty Heracles himself had instituted.

I rose and passed along the grass-grown streets, stepping across the fallen columns, and climbing over the crumbling walls. Here was the wide floor of the Palaestra, in which the athletes passed the last month of their training under the eyes of the Hellanodikai, or umpires. Still stood some remnants of the Doric columns that of old surrounded it, and in places might still be seen, amidst the springing weeds, patches of the tiled pavement, grooved to give the wrestlers' toes a grip.

Adjoining was the great Gymnasium, excavated in part only, but with sufficient laid bare to show the point of junction of the two long stoas, or covered galleries, in which the athletes were wont to practise running when the weather was wet.

A CORNER OF THE GREAT GYMNASIUM.

The Gymnasium was a large and open place of exercise, bounded on two sides by long stoas, or covered colonnades. That on the eastern side, of which the excavated part is seen in the picture, corresponded in length to the Stadion, and was used for running practice in wet weather. The columns have fallen, but their bases and pedestals are plainly visible.

I walked across the desolated city, past the razed walls of temples, shrines, and public buildings, and came to the Stadion. Through the single arch of hewn stone, which is all that remains of the tunnel's vaulted roof, I entered the secret passage which gave access to the arena, and trod the path by which the athletes went, along with the umpires and the heralds, from the Altis, or sacred precinct of the city, to the scene of their public trial. Emerging at the further end, I found myself at the starting-place — the extremity, that is, of the arena of the Stadion. The banked-up walls of the amphitheatre, one side of which was formed by the natural slope of the Kronion, can no longer be traced, nor has the main part of the arena been dug out. But at my feet lay the fragments of a limestone sill, sunk in the ground, which traversed the course at one end, and my heart beat fast as I pictured the row of gleaming bodies straining, with every muscle tense, at the start. Here it was that thp runners were drawn up in the order allottee to them, four in each heat, and sent off at the blast of a trumpet. Here it was that the hero Ladas crouched ere he sped away upon that fierce race wherein, dropping dead as he reached the goal, he found at once a glorious death and fame undying.

These things and much more. I am no archæologist, and thereby doubtless I lost much of the detailed significance of the ruins that lay about me. But such ignorance in no way detracts from (it may even enhance) the general impression which is made upon the mind.

That presently my thoughts should turn to a contrast of the old Games with the new was but natural. It was, indeed, of set purpose that I had come straight from the modern sports at Athens to view the site of that ancient festival of which they professed to be a revival. Comparison

THE RUINS

The great Games which took place every four years in the sacred city of Olympia were looked upon by the ancient Greeks as a high festival of deep religious and national significance. A universal truce was proclaimed while they lasted, and Greeks of every race came to Olympia to witness, or take part in, the celebrations. The city thus became a point of focus for the whole Greek nation, and as such occupied a position of unique political as well as religious importance. No citizen was allowed to enter the Games who was not of pure Greek blood, or against whom any lapse from civic or religious duty could be proved. A victory in the Olympian Games was the highest individual honour which a Greek could attain in life. Odes were composed in praise of the victor by such bards as Pindar, his statues were made by the greatest of sculptors, and the whole nation did homage to him.

THE OLYMPIAN

The new "Olympian Games" are held in the magnificent Stadion at Athens. This is a restoration of the ancient arena of the capital, and is the gift to his countrymen of the late George Averoff, a wealthy Alexandrine Greek. The huge amphitheatre is built of white marble from Pentelicus, and seats 60,000 persons. The picture shows the distribution of prizes to the athletes successful at the Games held in the spring of this year.

OF OLYMPIA.

The site of Olympia was excavated some years ago at the expense of the German Government. The city was bounded on one side by the hill of Kronion, and on two others by the river Alpheus, and its tributary the Cladeus. Periodically the latter overflows its banks, with the result that in the course of centuries the ancient city was buried beneath a deep alluvial deposit. Under skilled direction the ruins were dug out—sometimes at a depth of over 15 feet from the surface—and form one of the most remarkable relics of the ancient civilisation of Greece that remain. Very little is left standing, but the foundations of most of the buildings can be clearly traced. The raised platform seen to the right of the picture is the floor of the great Temple of Zeus.

GAMES OF 1906.

The so-called revival of the ancient Olympian Games took place ten years ago, when a great athletic festival, open to all amateur athletes, of whatever nationality, was held at Athens. The intention is to hold these modern Games in future once in every four years, the next meeting being due in 1910. The programme is a very extensive one, and embraces contests in almost every branch of athletics. Rifle and revolver shooting, lawn tennis and football are included

THE PALAESTRA.

The place of exercise for wrestlers and boxers. Here also the athletes passed the last month of training under the supervision of the umpires. The palaestra also contained the anointing-room and sanding-chamber, where preparation was made for exercise, baths, and the cubicles in which the athletes slept. The ground plan of the building can be easily traced, and many of the columns which surrounded it are left partially standing or intact.

was inevitable, even had it not been directly challenged by the deliberate announcement made ten years ago (when the scheme was first mooted), and repeated again this year, of the intention to resuscitate the ancient games of Greece.

Incidentally it may be remarked that the title of "Olympian Games" is, from an academic point of view, a complete misnomer. The notion of a public athletic meeting, open to foreigners, is utterly opposed to the principle guiding the ancient festivals of Greece, which were essentially national in character and afforded a common centre and meeting-ground for the different families of the Greek race. Nor is there any reason why Games played at Athens should be called Olympian rather than Pythian, Isthmian, or Nemean. The fact that the Olympian Games were highest in repute of all the ancient athletic festivals presumably guided the modern promoters in their choice of a name. The higher, for that reason, the standard by which the new Olympian Games demand to be judged.

Making allowances for the lapse of centuries, wherein does the modern athlete differ from his prototype? Like the Greek of old, he undergoes a period of preliminary preparation—less arduous and severe, perhaps, but sufficiently taxing. Like him, also, he competes (ostensibly at all events) *honoris causa*. Superficially it might seem that between modern and ancient no vital distinction existed. And yet, and yet——

Is the *spirit* the same? There lies the essential factor: the only point, indeed, upon which comparison can be made. It would be as profitless as absurd to discuss the relative merits of the modern disc-throwing contortionist and the Discobolus whose sculptured image has come down to us: to argue whether any of the olive-crowned victors in the foot-race of yore could hold his own with Archie Hahn in a level sprint, or any leaper in the ancient stadion, without the aid of *haltères* and spring-board, eclipse the feats of O'Connor and C. B. Fry. The important thing to learn, if comparison is to be made between ancient times and modern, is whether the spirit and purpose of the early Greek survives in the athlete of to-day; whether athletics remain what the Greeks made them, an educational force, and a vital factor in the formation of individual and national

THE FLOOR OF THE PALAESTRA.

The interior of the palaestra is overgrown with turf and weeds, but a considerable area is still covered with the grooved tiles which formed the original floor. The object of the grooves was to prevent the wrestlers and boxers from slipping.

character, or are degenerating into mere exhibition tricks, learnt and practised to catch the applause of the gallery.

Judged by this standard, can it be said that the "Olympian Games" of 1906 justified the title bestowed upon them, and were worthy to be ranked with the Games of old? I think not.

To the Greeks of old, athletics were a part of religion—the cult of the body which they implied a complement to that cult of the mind which gained for Greece the intellectual supremacy of the world. The athlete was taught to regard his trial in the Stadion as something more than a mere vainglorious effort to outdo his fellows. He looked upon it as a crowning act of noble, high-conceived devotion. He ran and jumped and wrestled for an *ideal*.

What cared a polyglot horde of pot-hunters for an ideal? The description may seem harsh and sweeping, but essentially it is true. The modern athlete, to utter a generalisation, is at bottom, disguise the fact as you will, a pot-hunter. Day by day he is becoming increasingly absorbed in the petty ambitions of record-breaking, championship-hunting and the like, letting his vision be obscured of that larger ideal which his prototype (with whom he so fondly challenges comparison) set before him; and so day by day growing less and less worthy of that respect in which the ancient Greeks held his kind. The uses of competition have become debased. To the Greek the object of a race, or any other contest, was to provide a due incentive to the putting forth of all his strength, not to the mere trivial end that he might come first to the goal and triumph over his rivals, but to a nobler, fuller purpose. In the eyes of the modern athlete a race too often is but the means of putting another "pot" upon his shelf, or adding a further "record" to his name in the sporting almanac.

Nothing, perhaps, is more significant of the modern trend of athletics than the increasing importance of what one may term "tactics." Take the case of the Americans at Athens this year. If I select them rather than others, it is because their numerous successes were the outstanding feature of the Games, and because it was to masterly tactics that those successes were largely due. Further, the undisguised attitude of the Yankees in general towards athletics seems to be characteristic of the modern spirit. That attitude, briefly interpreted, is: We're here to win, and any means which may legitimately be taken to win—without infringing the letter of the rules, that is—we take.

Hence, for example, the systematic swamping of the entries at Athens. In practically every preliminary heat of every race, the Yankees had at least one representative—often more. As a result, in the finals of the four principal foot-races, the field of eight in each case included four American runners. No one with the smallest knowledge of modern track-racing needs to be told of the immense advantage thus obtained. With two men, let us say, running to win, and two hunting the most dangerous of the foreigners, it is strange if a side so strongly represented cannot achieve, especially over a course of such peculiar difficulty as the one at Athens, an easy victory.

One might quote other examples of "tactics"—beating the pistol, "crawling" on the cycle track; there are plenty of them—but this will suffice. It is all part of the game nowadays. No rules are broken, no technicalities are infringed. Everything, in fact, is perfectly "legitimate." But is it in accordance with the spirit of the old Olympian Games? Again, I think not.

There arises the question: Is the spirit of the ancient athlete dead? Surely not. It survives yet, to make men of us and teach us to endure for endurance' sake. It has made the British what they are among the nations of the world, and so long as they hold it in reverence, as a thing worthy to be cultivated, it will keep them what they are. We call it "sportsmanship"—the motive which impels a man to do his best, whatever the contest, merely for the joy and credit of doing his best, and with no other end in view. The man we call a thorough sportsman (using that abused term in its best and proper sense), though he cannot do the hundred inside of twelve seconds, nor clear the bar at five-foot-six, is the true "athlete" in the sense in which the Greeks understood the word. Consciously or unconsciously, he has realised that athletics have a wider purpose than the mere winning of plated pots, and that there is something more in a race than the getting first to the tape. He has learned, in the words of a great writer, that "to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour."

COMPETITIONS FOR OCTOBER.

Last day for sending in, October 18. (Foreign and Colonial Readers, December 18.)

NOTICE.—At the top of the first page the following particulars must be clearly written, thus:

Competition No. ——, Class ——, Name ——
Address ——, Age ——.

Letters to the Editor should not be sent with competitions.

We trust to your honour to send in unaided work.

Pages should be connected with paper-fasteners; not pins.

Write only on one side of the paper.

COUPONS.—In order to ensure that those who compete for our prizes are actual purchasers of the magazine, we require all competitors to affix to their competitions the coupons which will be found on an advertisement page. A coupon is provided for each competition. Please use paste, gum, or paper-fasteners for attaching these coupons to the paper.

You may send as many attempts for each competition as you like, but each attempt must be forwarded in a separately stamped envelope and bear a coupon.

Every prize-winner is requested to apply for his prize. Only those articles actually offered for competition will be awarded as prizes. Girls may, however, have tennis racquets or hockey-sticks instead of footballs.

Address envelopes as follows: Competition No.——, Class ——, THE CAPTAIN, 12 Burleigh Street, Strand, London, W.C.

All competitions should reach us by October 18.

The Results will be published in December.

AGE RULE: A Competitor may enter for (say) an age limit 21 competition, so long as he has not actually turned 22. The same rule applies to the other age limits.

In every case the decision of the Editor is final, and he cannot enter into correspondence with unsuccessful competitors.

No. 1.—***"Spelling Reform."***—As you have no doubt read in the papers, President Roosevelt has inaugurated a spelling reform. He proposes that such words as catalogue should be spelt catalog, through as thru, sulphur as sulfur, &c. In this competition, indite a letter, not exceeding two hundred words, to President Roosevelt either in support or condemnation of his proposed reform. In the course of your letter endeavour to use as many words as possible that lend themselves to this reformed system. The prize will be a Columbia Graphophone. (See Prizes page.)

One age limit: Twenty-five.

No. 2.—***"Famous British Statesmen."***—On one of our advertisement pages you will find twelve pictures. Each picture is intended to suggest the name of a famous British statesman. Write the name under each picture, fill in your name, age, class, and address, tear out the page, and post to us. Prizes: Three "Official League" Footballs, by A. G. Spalding and Bros. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.
Class III. . . Age limit: Twelve.

No. 3.—***"Photographic Competition."***—Send a print from your best negative. Photographs must be original, *i.e.*, not copied from the work of others. Neatness in mounting will be taken into consideration. Prizes: Three Gradidge Footballs. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . No age limit.
Class II. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class III. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 4.—***"Drawing Competition."***—Send a sketch in pen, pencil, or water-colours of a CHAIR. Prizes: Two No. 2 "Scout" Cameras, by Houghtons, Ltd. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 5.—***"Handwriting Competition."***—Copy in your best handwriting the first six lines of "The Informer." Write only on one side of the paper. Prizes: Two Handsome Postcard Albums. (See Prizes page.)

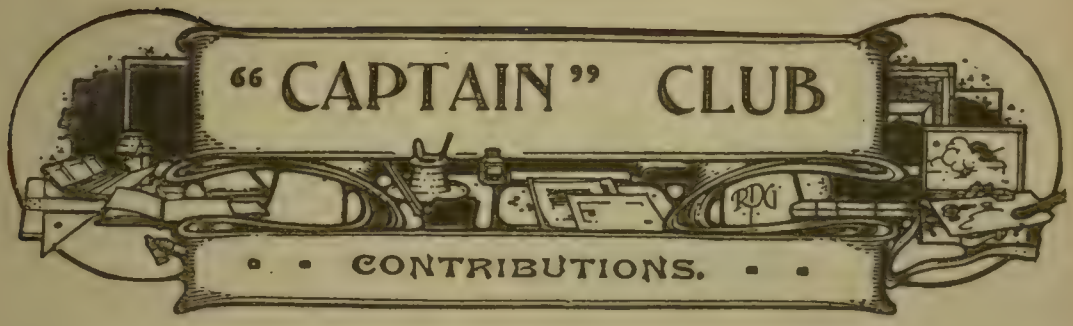
One age limit: Twelve.

No. 6.—***"The Great Heat"*** caught us at a most awkward time, just as we were getting this number to press. No doubt our readers have not forgotten Saturday, September 1, when the temperature was 93 in the shade, so we will ask them to send essays, not exceeding 400 words, describing their experiences on that day. A "Swan" Fountain Pen will be awarded to each of the three successful competitors, and the second in each class will receive an autographed copy of "Cox's Cough-Drops."

Class I. . . No age limit.
Class II. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class III. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

FOREIGN and COLONIAL READERS are invited to compete. In their case the time limit is extended to ***December*** 18. By "Foreign and Colonial" we refer to readers living ***outside*** Europe. There will be ***no age limit.*** One prize of 5s. will be awarded to the sender of the best entry in each Competition. Envelopes should be marked: "Foreign and Colonial October Competitions."

Coupons must not be sent loose.



THIS part of the Magazine is set aside for Members of the CAPTAIN Club with literary and artistic aspirations. Articles, poems, &c., should be kept quite short. Drawings should be executed on stiff board in Indian ink. CAPTAIN Club contributions are occasionally used in other parts of the Magazine.

BOOKS by CAPTAIN authors are awarded to all the contributors to this month's "Captain Club" pages. Each contributor is requested to select a book.

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A Curious Duel.

PUBLIC school boys, who growl when "hit" by a single-stick, may thank their lucky stars they were not born in an age when duelling was common. It is recorded that during the reign of Henry IV. a certain Lagarde Villon was matched against an illustrious soldier named Bazanez. Anxious to prove the skill of fence of the other, Bazanez (who seems to have added a sense of humour to his other accomplishments) challenged him by sending him a hat, with the threat of taking it from him, together with his life, at the first opportunity. Nothing loth, Lagarde Villon put the hat on his head and strolled leisurely forth to a place where he thought he might meet his foe, who, in fact, was waiting for him, just as he expected.

No sooner did they meet than they set to without words. Lagarde came down with a vigorous cut on the head of Bazanez, whose frontal bone, however, was so thick that the weapon was turned aside; but a second stroke found a softer spot in his skull.

"Ho, ho!" cried Villon, "that's for the hat, my friend." Parrying a thrust of Bazanez's, Lagarde inflicted another wound upon him.

"Ho, ho!" cried Villon, "that's for the feather, *mon cher*." Once more the blade of Lagarde pierced the luckless Bazanez.

"Ho, ho!" added Villon, 'that's for the tassel, *mon camarade*."

A humorist himself, how Bazanez must have appreciated the pleasantry of his opponent! But while he had lost a great deal of blood, he was far from giving in. Making a supreme effort, he hurled himself upon Lagarde and bore him to the earth. With his knee upon Villon's chest he drove his *poignard* repeatedly in a line around the neck of the prostrate man.

"Ho, ho!" cried he in his turn. "I now present you with a scarf to wear with the hat, dear sir."

Fourteen stabs in all did Bazanez give Lagarde, saying after each one: "Beg for your life."

"No, no, my dear fellow," replied Villon, "I am not done yet." And, hacked about as he was, he yet managed to smash in the

WHERE "ROBINSON CRUSOE" WAS WRITTEN.

The cottage at Mitcham, Surrey (now the back of a more modern residence), in which Daniel Defoe penned his immortal classic.

Photo. by C. Lavell

OAKHAM CASTLE, RUTLANDSHIRE.
Famous for its unique collection of horse-shoes.

back of his enemy's head with the pommel of his sword. However, both of the combatants were now spent, and presently lay together, apparently dead. And dead they assuredly ought to have been, but, marvellous to relate, both recovered.

F. S. STRYPE.

The Horse-shoes at Oakham Castle.

OAKHAM CASTLE, Rutlandshire, was, there is little doubt, built in the reign of Henry II. by Walkelin de Ferrers, then lord of the manor, who instituted the interesting custom that any noble by birth who passed through the town of Oakham for the first time should "forfeit as an homage a shoe from the horse whereon he rideth, unless he redeem it at a price with money." The custom still survives, but for more than three hundred years the fine has been used to defray the cost of a specially designed horse-shoe. Nowadays, when a peer of the realm has passed through the capital of England's smallest county, he is written to and asked to contribute a shoe to the collection, a request which is usually complied with. The fact that the Ferrers who came over with the Conqueror was that monarch's master of horse, and had as his armorial bearings "argent six horse-shoes sable," may be the reason why his descendant chose this method of asserting his authority as lord of the manor. The collection numbers upwards of 150 shoes, sixteen of which were presented in the seventeenth century, while among the more modern ones is that of the late Queen, presented when she was Princess Victoria, that of her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and those given by their present majesties, the King and Queen, when they were Prince and Princess of Wales.

The castle itself, too, is of much historical interest, having been described as "the most perfect specimen of domestic architecture of the twelfth century which exists in any country." For more than two centuries the castle has been used as a shire hall, its interior beauty being much detracted from by the wooden partitions erected to enable assizes and quarter sessions to be held there.

ST. IVEL.

THE INTERIOR OF OAKHAM CASTLE, SHOWING THE ROYAL HORSE-SHOES.
That surmounted by the Prince of Wales's feathers was presented by the Prince Regent, while the large one to the left of it is said to have been given by Queen Elizabeth.
Photos. by B. Francis.

A Ramble by the Ouse.

MANY doubtless are the fellows who spend the Wednesday "half" among the woods, streams, and fields adjacent to their school. To such the Ouse affords at all times boundless enjoyment. Never have I wandered along this slow-flowing, reed-bordered stream, with its many osier beds, without coming across something of interest—either fur or feather.

The following is an account of a noteworthy ramble which I took one October afternoon, along the side of this river.

It was a beautiful autumn afternoon, and the town was soon left behind. Among the row of willows at the river-side a family of long-tailed tits were gaily and busily at work. On my right stretched several hundred acres of ploughed land, on which a few small scattered flocks of lapwings were feeding, these being reinforced even as I walked by two more parties of about twenty birds each. Upon the same land was also a fairly large-sized flock of golden plover. During this time the hedges on my left had brought forth many of the more common birds, such as common buntings, meadow pipits, chaffinches, greenfinches, &c., and also one pair of lovely-plumaged bullfinches.

Turning off the beaten track, I now entered country that was quite of a wild character, at least, so far as the usual town appurtenances are concerned, and had not gone far before, on a small tuft of thistles, appeared a single goldfinch, a bird unfortunately getting rare.

Moorhens were numerous, as also were mallard, whilst on nearing a small waterfall two beautiful kingfishers dashed by, glowing in emerald and scarlet.

Beyond the falls the river broadens out, the current here being scarcely perceptible. Alternate and repeated ripples of the surface of the water marked the place where four dainty dabchicks, totally unconscious of my presence, were diving and basking in the autumn sun.

And now, parallel with the fringe of reeds growing on the other side of the river, I noticed a bird swimming slowly and tranquilly along, a bird which I was sure I had not met before. About the size of a duck, its general appearance yet told me that it did not belong to the Anatidæ. The bird was about two hundred yards off, and as I did not want to disturb it, I went on my stomach and crawled carefully from willow to willow. Slowly the distance was lessened between us, and at last, snugly ensconced behind an old willow, I arrived exactly opposite the bird, and not more than four or five yards away.

Imagine my pleasure when I found that I was now within such a short distance of a splendid adult Great Crested Grebe.

After about five minutes the Grebe must have caught the glint of my eye, for, taking to the wing, and at the same time uttering its cry of "kewark," it flew leisurely down stream, alighting again on the water at a distance of several hundred yards.

Shortly afterwards my attention was arrested by the behaviour of a blackbird, which, with shrill cries of fright, flew hurriedly in and out of the high hedge, now on my right. Its terror was indeed justifiable, for, watching for several minutes, I saw a sparrowhawk make several attempts to take the blackbird, but each time the latter managed to reach cover. At last, however, it was just a shade too late. The hawk darted on its quarry, there was a great commotion among the twigs and branches at the top of the hedge, wild beatings of the wings of the two birds, and frantic cries from the blackbird. On reaching the hedge, the end, I found, had already come. The hawk, on my approach, swooped away, whilst lying in the thicket was the bleeding *body* of the blackbird, but *the head was gone*. Poor Merula.

The ground was now becoming marshy. Soon one or two snipe began to get up singly and zigzag away, followed from one patch of ground by quite a bunch, one being a jack snipe. In the distance I now espied four or five still grey forms, which proved, as I expected, to be herons. A beautiful sight these birds afford as they slowly take wing and plod away, or gracefully settle again. The good old "Hernshaw" is a bird that we cannot afford to lose.

My ramble was now closing; one more large field and the main road would be reached, and the light also would soon begin to fail. Bodies of rooks were flying home, whilst from the clump of beeches that I was at the moment passing, out flew, with a clatter, a score of wood pigeons, and up the trunk of one of these trees, apparently from the fallen branch lying at its foot, leaped a pretty little squirrel, who eyed me keenly for a second, and then was away out of sight.

As I passed through the gate from the field to the main road, my last vision on this enjoyable walk was of a kestrel in the turnip field beyond, hovering, high in the air, with quivering tail and pinions.

"G. D." (BEDFORD).

A Unique Record in Rugby Football.

A UNIQUE record was created last season at Newport, Monmouth, by the boys of the Eveswell Council School. This team won the Challenge Shield given by Councillor L. S. Abrahamson to the Newport Elementary Schools' Rugby Football League. The League numbers fifteen schools, which play each other on the league principle; a win counting two points and a draw one.

The Eveswell Team played fourteen matches and won them outright without having a point scored against them. This is in itself a record in Rugby football—and one that is not likely ever to be beaten. In addition, they hold the record for the highest score in a single League game, and for the highest number of points which any League Team has collected during one season; the former score being 11 goals 5 tries (68 points to nil), the latter, 36 converted goals, 8 dropped, 1 penalty and 52 tries (371 points to nil). This record, being of a triple character, is thus unique.

Four of the players of this school have represented the town of Newport in Inter-town matches; one of their number, Tom Cartwright, being the captain. He, with another Eveswell boy, played for Wales last season at Leicester.

Tom Richards, the captain of the Eveswell School Team, also plays for his town.

O. C.

THE SMALLEST HOUSE IN PARK LANE, W.
Photo. by F. C. Turner.

THE BEACH AT BEER, SOUTH DEVON.
Photo. by D. C. Beadel.

Beer, South Devon.

HAVING resided for some years in this "little-known holiday resort," I should like to correct some rather misleading statements concerning it which were published in your August number. There is not only *one* street in Beer; there are at least half a dozen, and two or three of them are thoroughfares. There *is* a policeman, and over the door of the cottage which serves as a police-station may be seen the "Devon Constabulary" plate. Beer has a resident population of 1200, and to provide light for so many people there are *thirty* lamps distributed through the village, six of which are placed in the main street, which, however, is not of great length. It is true that the lamps are only lighted during the winter—from September to March, inclusive; but, indeed, they are seldom needed in the summer. I do not think it is peculiar to Beer to have its post office at a grocer's shop. I had nearly forgotten to mention that we have a watering-cart. Finally, there is great difficulty in obtaining rooms at Beer in the season.

W. N.

12 BURLEIGH STREET, STRAND, LONDON.

A Serious Suggestion.—"I think" (writes "Balbus"), "that THE CAPTAIN would be the better for yet another 'Corner,' and I am writing to ask you to give it to us. I don't quite know how to say what I want to, but it is something like this. A boy's life is the better for having religion in it, and wouldn't his magazine be more complete with a Corner for the best part of the boy? Perhaps you'll say that it is not desirable to put those sort of things into an otherwise amusing kind of paper. But, sir, consider the religious papers which are published. What boy could read most of them unless he were a regular granny? And yet he would read a short, manly sermon in his favourite magazine and be the better for it. Then, too, how many questions a boy would sometimes ask but for the seeming impossibility of opening his lips on such a subject! He would, I believe, be glad to have some sort of a sky-pilot—call him what he will—to give him a help sometimes. Of course, you'd want just the right sort of man, but he ought not to be more difficult to find than an Athletic Editor. Now, Mr. Editor, will you please think this over, and don't say 'No' in a hurry just because no other paper has ever done anything of the sort before. If our Christianity is worth anything, we don't keep it only for Sundays, and I don't believe a 'Christian's Corner' would be a bit out of place in the best magazine published."

This is a somewhat difficult letter to answer. It is, of course, an editor's first duty to cater for the requirements of his readers, and I should be quite willing to establish a Corner dealing with the spiritual side of life if I could do it without assuming the appearance of trying to force religion down the throats of my readers. A man's or boy's religion is a very sacred thing, and it is a thing which the majority of Englishmen refrain from talking about. It is, for instance, part of the clubman's code that a gentleman should never attempt to discuss with a fellow-clubman the latter's religion, business, or love affairs. As regards the establishment of a Corner in this magazine to be called the "Christian's Corner," I must say that I do not think such a feature would be welcomed by the majority of our readers—especially under such a title. "Balbus" must remember that THE CAPTAIN is read by people adhering to a large number of different creeds, and if we appointed a chaplain to conduct the Corner in question he would be compelled to frame his little discourses on very broad lines, inculcating moral principles in a general kind of way. Well, now, it has always been my endeavour to make THE CAPTAIN, as a whole, impart such principles by its atmosphere and its views of life. The post has recently brought me a letter in which the writer (W. G. W.) says, "I do not think that any fellow could take up a number of THE CAPTAIN, and read any of the tales or articles therein without feeling better for doing so. Fine characters in the tales, sound advice in the Editorial, and general healthiness all the way through, all tend to stir one up to try and do a bit better, be a bit better, and be more worthy of the name of Englishman." It may seem a little self-laudatory on my part to print this, but I merely quote it as an argument against the establishment of a "Christian's

Corner," insomuch as THE CAPTAIN as a whole, as W. G. W. suggests, endeavours in a quiet way to appeal to what "Balbus" happily describes as "the best part of the boy." However, should "Balbus" or any other reader need advice on spiritual matters, let him write to "The Chaplain," c/o THE CAPTAIN, who will reply through the post.

The Olympian Games.—When Mr. A. E. Johnson returned from Greece after

THE SECRET ENTRANCE TO THE STADION AT ATHENS.

A tunnel through the masonry at one end of the Stadion gives access to the starting-place from the Altis, or sacred precinct of the city. Athletes, umpires and heralds were alone privileged to enter by this passage.

Photo. by A. E. Johnson.

witnessing the Olympian Games, he told me so much that was interesting that I suggested he could compile a very entertaining lecture out of what he had seen—a lecture that would go down very well at public schools, for instance. If, therefore, any headmaster would like Mr. Johnson to come down to his school and lecture, he had better communicate with me. The subject would be "The Olympian Games," and under this heading Mr. Johnson would include a vast amount of information which he picked up whilst wandering about Greece after the games had been concluded. He took a panorama camera with him, and brought away pictures of a most instructive and picturesque character. It was his privilege to gaze on the ruins of the very temple where "Demetrius, for love of gain," raised an uproar against Paul (*see* Acts xix.). A photograph of these ruins appears in this number together with others of a similar nature. It is evident, therefore, that Mr. Johnson accumulated in the course of his wanderings much to say that would appeal to a schoolboy, or, indeed, any kind of, audience.

The Athlete: Ancient and Modern.—Nowadays, when the great silversmiths' shops display the glittering trophies which are to be contested for at some athletic meeting, it bears one away from this humdrum age to think of the Greek athletes of old running for a simple laurel wreath. "They which run in a race run all, and one receiveth the prize"—a prize of so primitive a character that a maiden could pluck and fashion it. It cost nothing, but the honour of winning it was such that it brought about a fiercer spirit of emulation than any modern award, however valuable, has ever done. I should like to go to Greece and visit the places where athletes of this kind used to pit their strength and speed against one another. Talking with Mr. Johnson of these matters, the question occurred, Were the athletes of St. Paul's time such good men as ours? We have no "times" to help us in the comparison, but I should say that, taking one thing with another, your modern athlete would not be in the race. For, despite the scientific medical advice that he enjoys, the perfect "tracks," his "spikes" (the Greek of old ran barefooted), and the patent foods that are at his command, the modern athlete does not live the simple, open-air life of the ancient Greek—a life all in favour of promoting marvellous endurance and great swiftness of foot—and so, as Nature's way is always best, I have no doubt that if you could revivify one of the old Greek runners, and put him side by side on the mark with one of our champions, the Greek would easily demonstrate his superiority.

A final word as to the prizes that athletes compete for. No doubt athletic contests must move with the times. The ancient Greek was a very simple fellow, and was content with a simple reward. Nowadays, although a very large number of athletes, especially at schools, think of little except the honour of winning, far too many run for what they can get. True, it is a considerable satisfaction to win a handsome prize, put it on one's sideboard, and show it to one's friends in after years as a proof of what one *could* do once upon a time, and so the prize system is quite a sound one; but when it leads to pot-hunting it becomes ignoble. However, let us endeavour to look upon human nature at its best, and readily allow that even in these decadent days—from a physical point of view—the honour of winning takes precedence of everything with everybody born with the true sporting instinct in him. I think that if a great athletic gathering were held in London at which competitors from all parts of the world might enter, and that if for the principal race of the meeting the King, instead of a trophy worth £250, were to offer a prize consisting simply of a laurel wreath, that would be the prize which would bring together the greatest runners in the world.

Are you Left-eyed?—A. S., Jnr., writes: "I expect you do not want further correspondence on this subject, and would not trouble you but for the fact that Mr. Williams, in the September CAPTAIN, says he has seen my recipe given elsewhere. As I know so well how strongly you insist on original work only being submitted for the C.C. pages, I would like to say that I have never seen this idea in print, either in its present or any other form. I think I got the information while learning to shoot, but am not sure. (I am a volunteer.) Mr. Williams is such a versatile gentleman that he commands the respect of all staunch Captainites like myself, but I think he has been caught napping in this instance. It may be that Mr. Williams is the exception in having his eyes of equal strength (or perhaps his spectacles equalise them), but, as you yourself point out, my experiment 'works' with the key in either hand, and whether held away to the side or straight in front. Mr. Williams' experiment proves nothing; as, of course, each eye *used alone* looks along a different line from the other. However, I suppose you have heard enough about this little matter. Mr. Williams and I will just shake hands—if he doesn't mind."

"The Passage of the Styx."—My readers will remember that in THE CAPTAIN for December 1904, we published a story, bearing this title, which described how a new boy at a school was told that he was expected to walk along a narrow ledge between two dormitory windows, and how in making an attempt to do so he very nearly lost his life, only being rescued from his perilous position with great difficulty. The author of this tale, Mr. E. H. S. Barnes-Austin, has recently sent us an account of an escapade, somewhat similar to that described in his story, which was unfortunately attended with fatal results. Here is Mr. Barnes-Austin's description of the fatality; "At a certain 'crammer's' a large ledge seated in the brick-work ran along the upper façade of the house between two windows, and the fellows used to make a practice of walking along it and entering the windows of their chums' rooms, partly out of bravado, and partly for fun. This ledge was about twelve inches wide, so it afforded a tolerably good foothold, provided one had the necessary nerve to essay the task. One day one of the men started out to visit a chum whose window was some ten feet or so distant from his own. When he reached the window, however, his friend, for a joke, closed and bolted it, so he had perforce to return whence he came. Meanwhile, some one else had entered his room, and also closed and fastened the window there. Finding he couldn't get in, the unfortunate victim of the practical joke lit a cigarette and settled down to wait until the joker should relent and admit him. The other men crowded to the window to guy the outsider, laughing and jesting at his expense. But a terrible thing happened before their horrified eyes. Without the least warning the ledge suddenly gave way, and the poor fellow was precipitated to the ground, meeting a frightful death upon the spikes of the railings below. I think this incident is worth relating, not only as a peculiar instance of fiction being paralleled by truth, but also as a warning to those who might be inclined to undertake similar dangerous feats."

Historical Characters as Athletes.—The following essay, from

the pen of Bernard C. Cory, was one of the best submitted in this competition. I hope to quote other essays in future numbers.

Oliver Cromwell is not an absolutely ideal centre-forward, but he is undoubtedly the nearest approximate we have to that standard, so an analysis of his style will perhaps be of interest.

In the first place, he feeds his wings well, keeping his partners on the attack always

SMALL URCHIN TO STREET MUSICIAN: "If yer please, sir, will yer blow our ball up?"

From a sketch by J. C. Whitworth.

"on the go," and while getting the line to work together harmoniously as a whole, never fails to give the impression that he himself, cool and resourceful, is leading in the onslaught on the enemy's centre. His shooting is deadly, and opposing custodians fear him, not only on account of the "sting" behind his shots, but also from his accuracy in placing, striking them, so to speak, where they are weakest. His methods are of the vigorous order, and having once fastened on to the ball, it is not easy to charge him off it. Although there may not be the same brilliancy about his game as is exhibited at times by that erratic player, P. Rupert, yet for consistency and solidity, if one may so call it, of play, he has no equal, and with this he has also plenty of "dash."

As regards captaincy, he has been very successful, his famous team, the "Ironsides," organised and trained by himself, having everywhere carried all before them. This combination showed the possibilities of working together, each man having the same object in view, and promptly obeying one leader only.

His selection as "skipper" of the International team has given almost universal satisfaction, and his generalship and ability to knit together, not only the forward line of a team, but the whole side, will no doubt inspire confidence in both his fellow-players and all followers of the game.

The Barton Cup.—In the rowing story bearing this title which appeared in our last issue, the author, Mr. Stuart Wishing, allowed a coach to accompany the winning crew along the towing-path, and to give them hints and orders during the race. A correspondent ("Bristolian") takes exception to this, as, he urges, "a coach's work ends when a race begins." I have afforded Mr. Stuart Wishing an opportunity of explaining the action of the coach in his story, and this is what he says: "'Bristolian' is both right and wrong. In some races, *e.g.*, Oxford *v.* Cambridge, hints from the coach are not given. As to rowing on the 'Gear,' it is six years since I had that pleasure, but my impression is that our coach *did* advise us occasionally during the race. In the Cambridge bumping-races, coaches certainly advise—by means of pistols, rattles, bells, and word of mouth. Etiquette is not always observed. Once when I was running with our first boat (I wasn't the coach), the stroke, afterwards President of the C.U.B.C., even looked out of the boat and asked me how far ahead the boat above them might be!"

Why the Sea is Salt.—"Questioner" wants to know why the sea is salt. On consulting an interesting work called "A Thousand Answers to a Thousand Questions," I glean the information that the softer portion of the land, or solid part of the earth, contains certain quantities of

salts which are soluble in water. These are washed out from the banks by the rivers and smaller streams which flow into rivers, and are so carried down to the sea. Evaporation carries the water back again, so that "the rivers run into the sea, yet is the sea not full"; but, needless to relate, no salt is carried back by evaporation. Therefore the salts tend to accumulate in the sea, which is salty because of all the salt that has been carried down to it by the rivers since the earth received its present form. Much of this salt is, however, used up by marine animals and plants, and in being so is chemically transformed. So that, though it seems at first sight as if the quantity of salt in the sea ought to continue to increase indefinitely, it by no means follows that it must. I may add that the most salt sea is the Dead Sea, which contains 190 lb. of salt to every ton of water, and that the least salt sea is the Caspian, which boasts only 11 lb. of salt per ton of water. The saltness of other seas and oceans per ton of water varies as follows: Black Sea, 27 lb.; Baltic Sea, 29 lb.; English Channel, 74 lb.; Atlantic Ocean, 83 lb.; Mediterranean, 87 lb.; Red Sea, 96 lb.

IN THE BRISTOL CHANNEL.

Drawn by J. Gray, aged sixteen.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

[As we receive a great number of letters, our correspondents are requested to bear in mind that we can only comment on communications that we consider to be of general interest. Readers requiring information quickly should enclose stamped envelopes or post-cards, according to the length of the answer they desire.]

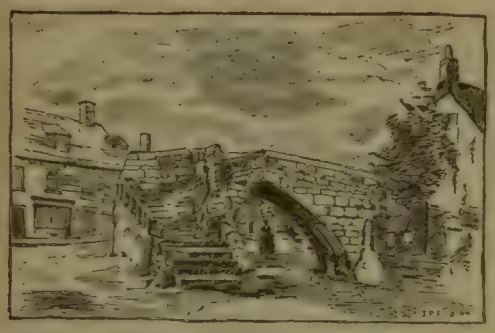
Joe.—You are full of energy and always on the move. Mentally you are well furnished, and will do well in your profession if you stick to it. I do not think that a person of your age would be admitted to a debate at the House of Commons. The course to adopt is to go into the lobby and ask one of the policemen on duty to send your card to the member for your division. On receiving your card your member will come out and politely pass you into the Strangers' Gallery. This is my experience, at any rate; all members, of course, may not be so obliging as mine! I am glad to hear you are fond of your school and regret the idea of leaving.

C. R. H.—You enclose some curiosities of the Bible discovered by a convict condemned to three years' solitary confinement. Did this convict hand on his discoveries to you, or how did you come by them? If you copied them out of a paper or magazine you are committing a breach of our rules, as we do not want anything that is not original. The fact that the word "and" occurs 46,277 times in the Bible is not of engrossing interest, since the word "and" is bound to occur a great number of times in any work. The most interesting facts the convict discovered is that the Bible is 773,602 words in length, that the longest verse is Esther IX. verse 8, that the shortest is St. John XI. verse 9, and that the nineteenth chapter of the Second Book of Kings is the same as Isaiah xxxvii.

"Bristles."—Very methodical and painstaking. You stand high in your class, and this year have just missed taking a prize. You will take one next year, and one of your aunts will give you five shillings as a present. You are fair-haired and

THE CLYDE FROM THE MOORS, WEMYSS BAY.

Drawn by M. Barnes.



THE FAMOUS TRIANGULAR BRIDGE AT CROYLAND.

Drawn by J. P. Fordham.

have a pinkish complexion, and you are better at cricket than at football. You have a dog, and generally take him out for walks with you. In the holidays you wear knee-breeches, grey stockings, and black boots. How do I know all these things with only your handwriting to go by? Wonderful, isn't it!

"Kim" can consider herself a member of the CAPTAIN Club if she is a regular subscriber to the magazine. Out of the "howlers" Kim sends I select as the best, "An archipelago is a narrow neck of water joining two large pieces of land"—although I fancy I have heard something of this kind before. "Fire away" as a translation of "Ignis via" is also a rather howling howler. "Blind Bartimaeus sat at the Beautiful Gate begging for almonds," strikes me as being a howler which has been specially composed—not genuinely perpetrated at an examination.

Tyn-y-Gongl.—A correspondent writes: "I notice in your August Editorial that this 'little-known holiday resort' is described as being on the west coast of Anglesey, and the nearest station as being Llanefui. The Tyn-y-Gongl I have stayed at is on the *east* coast of Anglesey, just north of Redwharf Bay, and marked on the map, I believe, as Beullech. The nearest station is Llangefui, but the best way to reach this place, on account of the train service, is to drive straight from Bangor, a distance of about twelve miles. The name is generally pronounced Tinny-Gong-ĕl (g hard)."

Constance is very fond of pleasure, and when playing a game or attending a ball is among the liveliest of the lively. She is frank and out-spoken, and is an outdoor girl. She would be successful at collecting money for a charity if she would put herself to the trouble of doing so, but she is not over fond of bothering herself about other people. She is late for breakfast three times a week, and doesn't always want to go to bed when it is suggested that she should do so. She is rather cheeky, and will marry a fair gentleman when she is twenty-nine.

F. W. J. Button.—As for you, my merry lad of Cheshire, I should say that when you write letters you sprawl half across the table and hold your head sideways. You are a fellow that wants a lot of pulling together and you have to take yourself in hand strongly when there is work to be done. You are straightforward, and have so much trust in the goodness of human nature that you are sometimes taken in by more crafty people. You have rather weak ankles.

"Orestes."—I am afraid your reply to the poem called "The Captain" doesn't come up in point of rhythm and happy expression to L. Spero's little flight. The first verse is the best:

> Some boys in maths. take their delight,
> And others classic's lore are wrapt in;
> Some study German day and night,
> *And* read THE CAPTAIN.

Myfanwy.—Oh, so that is pronounced My-van-wy! Rather a pretty name. You are inclined to look down on boys and snub them. You are very fond of collecting picture postcards, and you *love* going to concerts. When you write a letter you should give the address at the top more room and not run it right on to the edge of the page. You are rather obliging when properly asked, and so I shall be glad if you will get me six new subscribers before Christmas, Myfanwy.

"Pert."—"Up with the lark" is your motto. Sometimes, when you cannot get up with the lark, you are, at any rate, up with that somewhat lazier bird, the sparrow. You are fond of gardening and making things out of cardboard, &c. You are outspoken, and generally tell the truth. You are not very careful about details, or you would not write with a pen that has got a small hair sticking in it.

"Football Dress."—The knees are left bare for the sake of the greater freedom one obtains. No athlete nowadays thinks of pulling his stockings over his knees. I don't see what boys (unless they are very delicate) want with fur coats, but of course Scottish boys should wear kilts when Scottish dress is *de rigueur*. ("Down, Basket-ville!") I wonder why you asked such a question. Some of you co respondents are queer chaps.

H. B. C., when he has finished reading his CAPTAIN, sends it to a French friend living in a little town in Gironde, who declares that "it makes very good." As regards my guess at his characteristics, I should say that H. B. C. is a quiet lad, fond of reading and writing and doing other people a good turn. He, like "Bristles," stands high in his class at school, and will win a prize next year. He is fond of swimming, and is, in fact, more proficient at swimming than at cricket or football. He is rather self-conscious, but he will grow out of that in time.

PROPRIETOR OF TINNED MEAT CO., U S A: "Stop! Stop!! For goodness' sake, stop!!! Here's the inspector coming."

W. B.—I do not think that the majority of our boy readers object to this magazine being read by girls, or to girls going in for our competitions and writing letters to the Editor. Anyhow, I must tell you that personally I am glad so many girls read THE CAPTAIN; firstly, because it is a good thing for our circulation, and, secondly, because it is a good thing for girls to take an interest in boys' literature, and boys' sports and hobbies. A

girl's life without interests of this kind is apt to become rather a narrow one.

"Dumpling."—You are fond of reading, neat in your dress, and very healthy, and you will never give up reading THE CAPTAIN as long as you live. Your sister's handwriting is not sufficiently formed to allow me to express an opinion about the points of character it suggests. I don't mind hazarding an opinion, however, that she is even fonder of reading than you are, and is a quieter girl.

A. Glass.—Your writing is not without strength, and shows decision of character. Whatever you have to do you carry out with a commendable fixity of purpose. You are a little lacking in common sense, as it stands to reason that anybody who takes in THE CAPTAIN (or can get hold of a CAPTAIN coupon) can enter for our competitions.

Proposed "Captain" Chess Club at Holloway.—C. E. P. Brooks, 33 Drayton Park, Highbury, N., would like to form a CAPTAIN Chess Club in the neighbourhood of Holloway, and would be glad if CAPTAIN readers living in that district would communicate with him.

Colonial Competitions. — Australian readers are informed that they will be allowed an extra ten days over the time limit we fix for Colonial competitions. Those announced this month as closing on December 18, will, in the case of Australian readers, close on December 28.

"Patience."—Very methodical and painstaking. Your *nom-de-plume* describes your character. You are a plodder, and will do well in the world if you stick to the plan of life you have mapped out and always take in THE CAPTAIN.

Irene Davidson.—The exchanging of picture postcards is a hobby mainly for girls, and is thoroughly exploited in the columns of *The Girl's Realm*. I cannot establish an Exchange of that sort in this magazine.

Unclaimed Birthday Book. — Frances Sykes, who some time ago sent her birthday book to the Old Fag for his signature, is again requested to forward her address, in order that we may return the book to her.

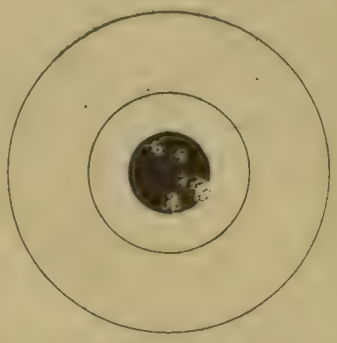
Marion Blenkinsop.—You are a tidy girl, and most punctilious in the discharge of all your duties. You are sharp-tongued, and will eventually marry a gentleman with red hair. Kindly send me a piece of the wedding cake when this happens.

Life-saving Drill.—The "Handbook of Instruction" mentioned in this article can be obtained from W. Henry, Esq., Hon. Sec, Life-Saving Society, 8 Bayley Street, London, W.C., price 1*s.* 1*d.*, post free.

W. Guttmann.—You have an idea of drawing, but that is all I can say at present. You must improve your draughtsmanship before we can publish your work in THE CAPTAIN.

A. M. Sayers.—As yet your idea of drawing is very crude and beginnerish. There is just a suggestion about your work that you may draw well some day if you stick to it.

"Sue."—I am afraid you are not a poet. The Hound of the Basketvilles shed a tear as he swallowed your effusion, and it is not often that our Hound weeps.



MR. C. B. FRY AS A MARKSMAN: SEVEN SHOTS AT 25 YARDS WITH A SALOON RIFLE.

F. H. Welch.—It is only under very exceptional circumstances that we print the portraits of sports champions.

A. R. Hanson.—Get away from that guide-book style. When you write about an interesting old castle, relate a legend concerning it, and so on.

C. V. Edwards.—We do not award certificates to competitors who are honourably mentioned.

"A Girl 'Captain' Reader."—You are painstaking, punctual, and truthful.

C. E. P.—I have noted the contents of your letter, for which I thank you. J. R. G.—Lion's head not badly done, but it would have been more creditable if you had executed it in ink. W. GRONOW.—Sketch would not reproduce well. SHOOTER.—No space. R. J. L. BELHAM, G. E. J. MARRIOTT, "GERAINT," and F. STANTON are thanked for the results of their respective school sports.

Letters, &c., have also to be acknowledged from: "Noel," S. S. Phâlke, "Discere volo," "He lewo muchi," H. R. C., E. Elvery, R. G. Solley, and A. C. Tribe.

THE OLD FAG.

Results of August Competitions.

No. I.—"Historical Characters as Athletes."

CLASS I. (No age limit.)

WINNER OF COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE: Alex. Scott, Junior, Burnside House, Tillicoultry.

HONOURABLE MENTION: A. A. Kerridge, M. M. Read, C. M. Le Mesurier, C. H. Greaves, Sydney Barton, Alfred Judd.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE: Bernard C. Cory, 49 Keppel Road, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: Dorothy Guilleband, Southill Vicarage, Biggleswade; J. S. Wilkes, Tredington, Shipston-on-Stour.

HONOURABLE MENTION: P. C. Wilson, J. L. Cadoux, Benjamin Corbyn, Daphne Werry, David Lang, Elsie Paterson, C. V. Edwards, W. H. Palethorpe, L. A. Pavey, T. C. Thorpe.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE: H. Guffick, 5 Cromer Street, Burton Lane, York.

HONOURABLE MENTION: G. Gregory, Maud Layfield.

No. II.—"Missing Words."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF POSTCARD ALBUM: Harold S. Light, 71 Talbot Road, Highgate, N.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Gwendolen Roupell, 29 Compton Avenue, Brighton.

HONOURABLE MENTION: J. W. Smith, B. C. Curling, A. N. Cade, P. R. Lavid, A. E Gott, E. A. McRae, J. H. Powell, J. S. Wilkes, B. J. Cole, D. C. Tovey, J. R. Peddie, D. E. Tyler.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF POSTCARD ALBUM: M. Copeman, Wincanton, Somerset.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: R. C. C. Foden, 38 Prince George Avenue, Raynes Park, Wimbledon.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Ellen Bennett, Ernest Cossins, Elizabeth Vaughan, A. F. Mortimer, G. Gregory, C. J. Marlow, Leonard Birkett, Winnifred Dow, F. A. Wythe, Norman Thomlinson, S. S. Cherry, G. R. Lunn.

No. III.—"Clock Sentence."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF No. O "MIDG." CAMERA: Wilfrid Beaumont Ault, The Heatheries, High Street, West Bromwich.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: F. G. Giller, 174 Maxey Road, Plumstead, S.E., Harry Calderbank, 10 Devon Street, Bolton.

HONOURABLE MENTION: J. R. Campbell, Monica Rigby, Clara E. Sent, C. G. Nash, Benjamin Corbyn, G. H. Webber, H. Brückmann, L. Ehrmann, C. H. Whitaker, John Hay, E. Pimrock, G. H. Callagan.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF No. O "MIDG." CAMERA: Archibald F. Webster, 68 Denbigh Street, London, S.W.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: F. A. Lawder, Mount Temple, Blackrock, co. Dublin.

HONOURABLE MENTION: R. C. Beattie, E. W. Tice, Thomas Renton, S. H. Weir, T. Wing, E. Hoerder, G. Sprang, S. Norrish, J. E. M. Brunskill, N. S. Mather, O. M. Williams.

No. IV.—"Design for 'Captain' Cover."

CLASS I. (No age limit.)

WINNER OF GRADIDGE FOOTBALL: Herbert Dixon, Dorothy Cottage, Acock's Green, Worcestershire.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: J. Forbes Herries, 1 Southey Place, Bradford, Yorks.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Constance H. Greaves, F. Dixon, R. S. Brown, M. Gilbertson.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF GRADIDGE FOOTBALL: B. Frederick Oldham, 79 Lancashire Street, Belgrave, Leicester.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: C. J. Chappell, 12 Triangle, Oldfield Park, Bath.

HONOURABLE MENTION: W. C. Boswell, Arthur B. Williams, Owen Coghlan, G. M. Mackenzie, Joseph Taylor, F. Ware, Gregor McGregor, G. W. Kemp, F. C. Davidson, Muriel Mackie, James Clayton, Vera Trew, H. H. Knight, E. Gledstanes.

No. V.—"Photographic Competition."

CLASS I. (No age limit.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: A. Lenton Pentelow, 73 Sleaford Road, Boston, Lincolnshire.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: E. Courtman, Denford House, Atkins Road, Clapham Park, S.W.

HONOURABLE MENTION: W. J. Blyth, H. F. Woods, W. Alstrom, Ursula M. Peck, Ethel E. Coath, E. G. Lucas, L. W. Taylor.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

PRIZE DIVIDED BETWEEN: W. L. Taylor, 1 Market Place, Henley-on-Thames; and A. W. Moore, 21 Sydney Avenue, Bowes Park, N.

HONOURABLE MENTION: S. H. Mytton, M. R. Moss, A. C. H. Adams, J. H. Doggett, S. J. Pick, T. C. Thorpe, R. Joslin, C. Cotton, R. E. O. Chipp, Leonard Nodes, H. J. Sanders.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

PRIZE DIVIDED BETWEEN: Edwin Long, 74 Palace Road, Streatham Hill, S.W.; John H. Begg, 15 Albyn Terrace, Aberdeen; Norman M. Paton, Ardene, Blackhall, Paisley.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Marjory Chambers, P. Arrow, Charles Williamson, C. Burrell, W. G. Halley, Fred. Elt, C. R. Bennett, M. Copeman, G. M. Eaton, A. H. Mason.

No. VI.—"August Celebrities."

CLASS I. (No age limit.)

WINNER OF "SWAN" FOUNTAIN PEN: Nellie Kennedy, 62 Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, co. Dublin.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Joseph H. Heeley, Elm Lodge, Formby, Liverpool.

HONOURABLE MENTION: E. J. Gore Davids, J. Forbes Herries, A. A. Kerridge, S. J. Giles, R. H. Burlingham, Emma Moffett, S. Greenwood, C. Maud Heddy, Ethel Rainer, W. Island, S. Hartill, Sydney Barton.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF "SWAN" FOUNTAIN PEN: Lilian A. Weter, 114 Chesterfield Road, St. Andrew's Park, Bristol.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: B. Roe, Belgrave Square, Monkstown, co. Dublin.

HONOURABLE MENTION: D. F. G. Johnson, G. B. Hindmarsh, Ernest Pinnock, D. Guilleband, H. P. Bryant, Blanche Clarkson, P. C. A. Skinner, W. F. Curtis, T. W. Spikin, P. W. Braybrooke T. C. Thorpe.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF "SWAN" FOUNTAIN PEN: Alan F. Robertson, 3 Brookfield Gardens, West Kirby, Cheshire.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: J. J. Gardiner, 18 Vicarage Road, Hastings.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Thomas Frederick, F. E. Belfield, H. Leggatt, J. B. Kincaid, Jack S. Bishop, G. F. Bourne, Norman M. Paton, A. W. Fox, S. S. Cherry, Edgar Stagg, Jone Vince, Oscar E. Seyd.

Foreign and Colonial Readers—(June.)

No. I.—WINNER OF 5s.: N. Vivian Tonkin, P. O. Box 224 Germiston, Transvaal, South Africa.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Thomas F. Tolhurst (South Australia), G. N. Ebden (Cape Colony), F. C. Groves (Transvaal), David R. Chapman (South Africa), Aubrey du Toit (Cape Colony), Jack Loutet (Canada).

No. II.—WINNER OF 5s.: Kate Campbell, Yarralumba, Queanbeyan, New South Wales, Australia.

HONOURABLE MENTION: S. S. Phâlke (India), G. N. Ebden (Cape Colony), F. W. Molesworth (Canada), Cecil Guthrie (Trinidad).

No. III.—WINNER OF 5s.: D. A. Turpin, Chambra State, Punjab, India.

No. IV.—WINNER OF 5s.: D. G. Barry, Custom House, Cape Town, South Africa.

No. V.—WINNER OF 5s.: Cyril Norman, 74 Queen Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Leslie H. Burket (Canada), B. A. Spence (St. Vincent), Cecil Guthrie (Trinidad).

No. VI.—WINNER OF 5s.: Mary L. Whitfield, 6 York Street, Launceston, Tasmania.

HONOURABLE MENTION: B. A. Smellie (India), G. N. Ebden, T. F. Tolhurst, Cyril Norman.

Winners of Consolation Prizes are requested to inform the Editor which they would prefer—a volume of the "Captain," "Strand," "Sunday Strand," "Wide World," "Technics," or "C. B. Fry's Magazine," or one of the following books—"Tales of Greyhouse," "The Heart of the Prairie," "J. O. Jones."

Comments on the August Competitions.

No. I.—There was a comparatively small number of entries, and only a few competitors entered into the spirit of the competition, most of the attempts being rather forced and unreal.

No. II.—A most popular competition. Many excellent solutions were supplied. The paragraph containing the "missing words" appeared in "The Mouth of the Cavern" last month.

No. III.—The winning sentences will be quoted in next month's Editorial." The competition proved a most interesting one, and it was difficult to select the best sentences from so many clever attempts.

No. IV.—Although the new ideas submitted were rather few, the designs were very well executed. No design, however, was sufficiently good for reproduction on our cover.

No. V.—Some very creditable photographs were sent in, the competition in Classes II. and III. being particularly keen.

No. VI.—A great many excellent essays were submitted, but there was less variety than usual among competitors in the choice of a "Celebrity," Sir Walter Scott being the hero of the majority. A few, however, selected Tennyson, Southey, Walpole, Bonaparte, and Nelson.

THE COMPETITION EDITOR.

SHADE OF GUIDO F.—"And this is fame!"

TAMTIA HAD SUPREME HEIGHT, BUT FIGHTING, TO EVERY ONE'S SURPRISE, NULLIFIED IT WITH HIS MARVELLOUS AGILITY.

See page 101

THE CAPTAIN

A MAGAZINE FOR BOYS AND "OLD BOYS"

VOL. XVI. NOVEMBER, 1906 No. 92.

THE EXPLOITS OF TANTIA BHEEL.

By T. S. GURR.

No. 2. TANTIA'S DUEL—AND AFTER.

Illustrated by GEO. SOPER.

"YES, there can be no doubt about it," said Fielding, as he lay comfortably back in his canvas chair and chewed the end of a cigar after listening patiently to Cummings' long recital of Tantia's various exploits. "our Bheel dacoit is a remarkable, an epoch-making scoundrel."

"None greater," said Cummings, satisfied that his dramatic narration had impressed the distinguished police officer in front of him.

"And yet," continued Fielding, "I should not care to believe he was a more desperate and cunning ruffian than the Burmese dacoit, Da Boh, whom I hustled to the gallows last November."

"Perhaps not," said Cummings, "but I venture to suggest he is a more slippery customer to deal with."

"You have had some experience with him, have you not?" inquired Fielding, with a barely perceptible smile.

Cummings flushed, but ignored the question. "The man who captures Tantia," he said, "must not only be a strategist, but a masterly hand at dealing with a sudden and unexpected situation. Men have striven to capture him who have never been able to come within ten miles of him. They cannot follow a trail. One requires the swiftness of a greyhound and the tracking instincts of a bloodhound to succeed in cornering him. I, for one, have had no difficulty in running him down. But it is when your hands are actually upon him—the handcuffs almost on his wrists that his genius asserts itself. He sees a loop-hole at a flash and escapes by it!"

"And then invariably turns the tables on his would-be captor!" exclaimed Fielding, with a suggestive twinkle in his light blue eyes. "The strategy that fails to compass its end is no strategy at all. In dealing with such characters as Tantia, one must be prepared, not only to capture, but to resist being captured."

"Just so," agreed Cummings. "Anyway, Fielding, I wish you every good luck. I am convinced that if you fail, Tantia will never die with a noose round his neck. Remember this piece of advice, however—don't pay any heed to any reports or information brought in by the natives of this district. They are all practically in league with him. Some are in his employ, others are his sympathisers, and the remainder are too terrified to give him away. You really cannot trust your servants, for amongst them might be one of his followers, or even Tantia himself in disguise."

"I shall have to dismiss my entire staff at that rate, for they have all been recruited here, with the exception of my butler. Tut, tut. Leave niggers to me, Cummings. I've not spent fifteen years amongst the criminal classes without knowing a shady character when I meet one. Won't you stop the night?"

"No," answered Cummings. "I'll catch

the eleven down at Vali. I must be in Chotapore to-morrow morning."

The syce presently appeared with one of Fielding's horses, and Cummings mounted to ride the ten miles to Vali station.

"Good-bye!" he shouted as he trotted off. "Telegraph to me for assistance, should it be required. I can take the field with at least thirty of my volunteer company at a moment's notice."

Soon after his visitor had departed, Fielding prepared for bed. He was a short, podgy man, with a plump, ruddy and good-natured face. His features expressed a placid and comfortable mind, and were very seldom roused from their state of habitual repose. His half-closed eyes indicated an easy, indolent nature, and his whole general appearance belied his true character. Fielding was considered to be the smartest and most energetic police officer in the service of the Indian Government. He was the terror of the Indian criminal classes, and a perfect scourge to dacoity. His fame had preceded him to the Chotapore district, and Tantia had already committed his entire official record to heart.

Fielding had camped in a small grove of mango trees in a position sufficiently far away to avoid being sniped at from the neighbouring hills. He was in personal command of about forty men, having posted other bodies in advantageous positions about the district. On the evening of the following day he had decided to surround the Gumti village, where, he had learnt, a great feast was to be given. A Bheel cannot resist the temptations of a good dinner and a rollicking "tamasha," and he felt positive Tantia would be there. To break through the cordon he would set, Tantia would have to be wily indeed.

Before turning in, he took a walk round the camp in his pyjamas to see that the sentries were properly posted and all was in order. As he passed, the strong sinewy Mahratta sepoys who formed the guard rose from their jovial circle round the camp-fire, and salaamed him. The presence of so great a sahib amongst them gave the camp a feeling of snug security.

His inspection over, he placed his revolver on a small table close to his camp-stretcher, and lying down with a sigh of weariness was soon fast asleep. Fielding possessed the capacity of falling asleep instantly anywhere; but however suddenly he was roused, every faculty was alert as soon as he opened his eyes. An earthenware goblet or "coojah" of water had been set on the table by the bearer, for in India white men often rise during the night consumed with thirst. Every member of the camp that was not on watch immediately retired when it was known that the chief was fast asleep.

It must have been some time after midnight that Fielding was suddenly awakened by strange sounds which ceased as soon as he sat up but which he was unable to locate exactly. "It must be flying foxes up in the trees after the fruit," he concluded, taking a deep draught from the "coojah." He was very thirsty, and it was only after he had set down his glass that he noticed that the water had a peculiar, unpalatable taste. "That soor of a bearer has given me unfiltered water," he grumbled, as he pitched the bottle against the tent-fly and smashed it. "I'll sack him in the morning. I wish I had brought my Bengali servants down with me."

Feeling very drowsy, he lay down again and was soon sound asleep. About half an hour later a dark hand deftly cut a circular hole in the tent top and a figure swiftly descended the tent-pole.

Quickly appropriating the revolver, the intruder began to bind the sleeper securely. Every movement was stealthy and noiseless. The free end of the rope depended through the hole in the tent, and the next minute Fielding, still breathing heavily in slumber, shot up through the roof of his tent with the ridiculous celerity of a pantomime dummy.

It was broad daylight and the sun was shining fiercely upon his face when Fielding awoke. To his unspeakable surprise, he found himself lying in a little hollow on the crest of a steep hill, with his range of vision practically limited and his hands and feet firmly fastened with stout cotton rope. Several half-naked figures stood up and grinned as he endeavoured to raise himself to a sitting posture. Not a single sepoy was in sight. He took the situation in at a glance. His head felt very heavy and dull and his limbs listless. He concluded that the water he had drunk during the night had been drugged, and that the Bheels had in some inexplicable way entered the camp and borne him away. He remembered Cummings' little experience, his own words of the previous night, and he inwardly cursed his folly and bad luck.

A tall wiry man now walked towards him and made a deep, almost obsequious, salaam. Instinctively Fielding knew he was confronting the wary Tantia, and he did not disguise the fact.

"You are Tantia Bheel," he said, looking

at the famous dacoit in a cool, imperturbable manner.

"Ah! sahib, Fielding sahib, can I send you anything to eat? You must be hungry." Tantia's face expressed admiration for the redoubtable officer who sat bound before him, his prisoner.

"Yes, I am hungry," Fielding answered in admirable Mahratti. "You must know," he continued, "that I am here to hang you?"

"Not here," said Tantia, grinning. "Some other time and place. But eat well. There is work before you ere the sun sets."

He left, and Fielding commenced a hearty meal of curried "dhal" and "chupatties." As he ate he wondered in a vague way what barbarous end was in store for him. He was a hard-headed man and never worried over prospective troubles, employing his thoughts instead on how he could circumvent his captors. There were still hopes that news of his capture had been conveyed to an officer commanding a neighbouring post, and that he might possibly blunder right on his tracks.

All day Fielding was kept bound and in exactly the same spot. Half a dozen armed Bheels sat a little distance off, calmly smoking. He begged for some covering for his head, and a dirty old jute sack was thrown over his bald pate amidst shrieks of laughter. Fielding smiled too. He could always appreciate the odd and ludicrous.

Just as the sun was sinking, Tantia appeared, cut the ropes that bound Fielding and led him a little lower down the hill. A large assembly of Bheels was seated on a fairly wide terrace, arranged in a circle. A hum of voices greeted him as he was brought into the centre. Before he could commence to wonder what he was there for Tantia handed him a long "tulwar" and a small round shield, and himself appropriated similar weapons. Fielding understood. It was to be a trial by combat: if he were victorious he would be allowed to make his escape unmolested. The Bheels squatting around were hushed in intense anticipation. Tantia advanced and prepared to attack.

"It is the fairest way," he said. "Why should our followers suffer? If you win, you may go free; if you refuse to fight, we will cut your throat like a pig's."

FIELDING SHOT UP THROUGH THE ROOF OF THE TENT WITH RIDICULOUS CELERITY.

"I don't wish to die like a pig!" exclaimed Fielding, springing forward with a fierce slash at his adversary.

Fortunately he was an expert swordsman, well versed in every form of native athletics and soldierly accomplishments. Although stout and stodgy, he was very muscular and as nimble as a cat. Tantia had superior height, but Fielding, to every one's surprise, nullified it with his marvellous agility. For ten minutes a deadly encounter was kept up. The hollow brass shields rang with strong strokes and cuts deftly parried—the opponents

breathed in short gasps, and the perspiration streamed from their faces and limbs. Cut and parry—feint and counter attack—sudden rushes and nimble springs aside, so the combat wore on. From the spectators came short grunts of admiration and cries of approval when one or the other of the combatants delivered or parried a clever blow. Now Tantia pressed Fielding back, and then the police officer resumed the offensive. Both men were becoming exhausted and neither had drawn blood. Then, as if by mutual consent, both combatants stood still and, gasping, eyed each other critically.

"Sahib," said Tantia after he had gained breath, "you are a fighter indeed! I have met none better. What say you of me?"

"Thou art the finest swordsman in Hindoostan, and too good a man to be hanged!" answered Fielding. "I shall see to it that thy end comes to thee by different means."

"Well said!" exclaimed Tantia. "Thou art a brave man. There lies the path towards Vali. Go! I feast at Gumti this night, and if thou art there, thy end, too, shall be different. Thy bearer will proceed a little distance with thee and show thee the way."

His camp-bearer, now in very different guise, jumped up and beckoned him to follow. At the foot of the hill the native stopped and turned back. "Dost thou know thy way?" he asked his late master.

"Yes," said Fielding, "thou canst return. I shall pay thee for thy few days' work, and especially last night's, some other time."

The Bheel salaamed and with a laugh turned away.

"When thou art in camp again," he said, "post some of thy sentries in the trees above thy tent."

Fielding walked slowly on. His feet, being bare, were cut and bruised during his rough clamber down. Tantia's words, "I shall feast in Gumti this night," kept recurring to his mind, but he was too good a policeman to be gulled in that way. Tantia was maturing some other scheme. What was it? He looked round; his late bearer had gained the crest of the hill. Fielding, too, had now reached a dry water-course and was invisible from the top of the hill. His plans were soon made. It would be dark in less than half an hour, and he decided on the daring measure of returning stealthily to the Bheel encampment and discovering what their future movements might be. Meanwhile, the Bheels would be comforting themselves with the reflection that their arch-enemy was proceeding in all haste to Vali to telegraph a report of the outrage that had been committed on him and summon assistance to mete out deserved punishment. As soon as it was dark he started off. In three-quarters of an hour he was lying on his stomach behind a clump of cactus, in full hearing of an excited Bheel council of war. In ten more minutes he was quietly clambering down the hill again, softly chuckling to himself. It was now half-past eight. In six hours' time the Bheels had decided to attack the Chotapore gaol and release the prisoners that had been captured during the Padli Bank raid, when Tantia had escaped Stoker Dobson.

Their arrangements were simple enough. Tantia's followers were to arrive in small numbers and occupy a position within two hundred yards of the gaol. He himself would lead the charge. A crafty Bheel, who seemed to be held in great esteem by his chief, was to enter the building at the gaol-gate, stab the sepoy on guard, take the gate-key and open the great lock. From the conversation, Fielding gathered that this man had entered Chotapore in disguise, ingratiated himself with the "naik," and found out exactly where the key was placed. He had also discovered the whereabouts of the Treasury, which contained a large sum in the shape of recently collected taxes.

He estimated he was twelve miles from Vali. At eleven o'clock the mail would arrive there. He determined to catch that train, and started off at top speed. The way was terribly rough, but when he gained the rough cart-track, ankle deep in yellow dust, he made easier and swifter progress. The stars shone brightly, but there was no moon. Fielding rushed along as fast as his torn and bleeding feet would allow. At a quarter to eleven the station-master at Vali was almost frightened out of his wits by seeing a stout, white sahib, covered with sweat and grime, dressed only in a cotton singlet and pyjamas, and bare-headed and bare-footed, dash into the telegraph office and quickly fill in a form.

"Send this forward to Mr. Cummings at once and ask him to forward a copy to the magistrate. Mind, the information contained here must not leak out, or you lose your billet."

"Tantia!" exclaimed the babu, as he commenced to operate, "I never split for him. Fact is, sir, I'd give a day's pay to see him hanged. Has he been chasing you, sir?"

"Never you mind. Tell your porters to keep their mouths shut, and don't let any of them leave the station till to-morrow morning.

CUMMINGS' ROW OF GLEAMING STEEL MET THEM AT THE CHARGE.

And if you've got a pair of stockings and a coat that you can lend to Mr. Fielding—Chief Superintendent of Police—I shall be obliged!"

With a low bow the babu retired, returning shortly bare-footed and without a coat. "Take them, respected sir; my home is close and I can easily replenish myself. Here is the train!"

By half-past one, Cummings and Fielding had disposed their forces and made all arrangements. The volunteers and native sepoys were divided into two parties. One occupied a large "chawl" to the left of the gaol, and the other a "dhobie's" (washerman's) hut immediately in front. The men took up their stations without attracting notice. A dummy was arranged in the guard-house to represent the sepoy on duty, and the key was put in its customary place. No shot was to be fired until the Bheels were safely in the courtyard, and then a rush was to be made to keep them there. The courtyard was surrounded by high walls crowned with spikes and broken glass, and was a veritable *cul-de-sac*.

At half-past two no Bheels had appeared, not a sound heralding their presence had even been heard. Cummings looked sarcastically dubious, but Fielding's eyes were glistening. Presently a dark figure stole up to the gate, and, in a few seconds, it swung open. Then other figures softly crept up and disappeared into the courtyard.

Now was the time. With a swift rush the first party of volunteers gained the gate and entered, the second party under Cummings immediately following and forming up across the gateway to cut off the only means of retreat. This time Tantia was safely cornered.

Shot after shot rang out. The Bheels were making a good fight for it, but with cartridge and bayonet the volunteers and sepoys repelled every attack. Finding combined resistance useless, they broke up their line and every man sought to save himself. Time after time they rushed towards the gate to force it, but Cummings' row of gleaming steel met them at the charge. Some desperate men tried to scale the wall, but found that its smooth surface gave them no foot-hold. Round and round the courtyard they bolted, madly endeavouring to get out of the way of their pursuers, even battering at the Kutcheri door and the barred cells to gain momentary respite inside. But all was useless. Some surrendered; others, like cats at bay, still fought and rushed anywhere, everywhere, to escape the death or capture that must inevitably be theirs.

After a time the disorder gradually subsided. Cummings, burning to enter the fray, still faithfully obeyed orders and guarded the gate. Presently a sepoy from Fielding's force came hurrying forward. "We have captured Tantia! The budmash is captured

at last!" he exclaimed excitedly. "I go to fetch ropes to bind him."

"Hurry up, then!" yelled Cummings excitedly. "Let him out, boys, and close the gate again. I think we can join in the fun now!"

The prisoners were drawn up in a line, and Fielding, lamp in hand, peered eagerly into the features of each. When he had examined the last man he looked crestfallen.

"Tantia's not here," he said, "and I swear I saw and heard him a dozen times within the last twenty minutes. Is he among the dead and wounded?"

They turned towards the spot where the wounded and dead were laid out, foe separated from friend. Tantia was not among the Bheels' dead or wounded.

"Is he amongst our men?" exclaimed Fielding, completely nonplussed. There were only one dead and three wounded, and Tantia was not there.

Just then they heard one of their sepoys shout excitedly, "Sahib! Sahib!" and Fielding and Cummings were up to him in an instant.

"Look!" he said, "this dead man is no Bheel, but Nuzzar Khan, one of the Kutcheri sepoys. See, his clothes and turban have been stripped from him."

Fielding understood the inference. "Did you allow a sepoy to pass through the gates, Cummings?" he inquired very coldly.

"A sepoy who said you had sent him for ropes to bind the budmash Tantia, who had been captured, did obtain my permission to go outside to get them," replied Cummings very limply.

"He'll be a dashed long time coming back," said Fielding, still more coldly.

TO THE BLUFFER.

To make what you know go a long way,
By a process that savours of sham,
Is, humanly speaking, the wrong way
In which to get through an exam.
Intent upon getting off cheaply
You may, in your ignorance, think
To impress the examiners deeply
By using a gallon of ink.

But—don't cover quires with your sprawling
And hieroglyphical scrawling—
There's nothing that looks so appalling
Whereas a blank sheet
Looks neat!

If Virgil, or Livy or Cæsar
Are figuring on the "menu,"
You'll probably fancy the keys are
Successfully pulling you through.
But your versions will teem with suggestions
Of Kelly (or possibly Bohn);
And if mythological questions
Are set—you must leave them alone!

Don't mention, to show what you *do* know.
That Jupiter's consort was Juno;
Examiners know more than you know,
So irrelevant bosh
Won't wash!

I'd always consider the odds on
The fellow who honestly crams—
The chap who consistently plods on—
"Gas" never yet paid in exams.:
For it places you under restriction
To know that you're dealing with fact;
To pose as a writer of fiction
Is to show yourself wanting in tact.

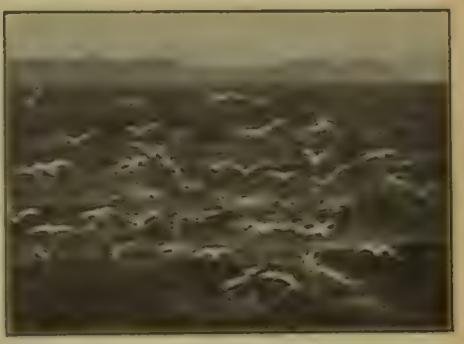
Oh, vain is the bluff of the bluffer!
And the stuffing betrayeth the stuffer!
Then, what of the self-confest duffer?
Well, he's honest at least,
Poor beast!

ARTHUR STANLEY.

How our Fish is Caught.

THE DEEP-SEA FISHERMAN PHOTOGRAPHED AT WORK ON THE ICELAND FISHING-GROUNDS BY A. E. JOHNSON.

TWENTY to thirty years ago the famous deep-sea fishing-grounds of the North Sea showed signs of approaching exhaustion, and trawlers were obliged to go further a-sea for their spoil. The quest for new waters resulted in the opening-up of the prolific grounds of the south and east coasts of Iceland, where the bulk of the fish taken by the trawl—cod, haddock, halibut, and plaice, to wit—is caught. The vessels employed in the industry are steam trawlers (from Grimsby and Hull chiefly) of the type illustrated above.



The First Sign of the Catch.

The trawl having been towed for the space of two or three hours, the ship is stopped. The "bag" then rises from the depths and floats upon the surface, where it is at once attacked by the gulls.

"Hi-yi-yi-*up* with it, *up* and *up* again!"

The wide mouth of the trawl having been hauled by the winch alongside, a knot of deck-hands lay hold of the slack of the net and laboriously drag it on board.

The Bag Alongside.

A rope having been twisted round the slack, a turn or two of the winch completes the work of the deck-hands, and as the bag lies alongside, tackle suspended from the mast is hitched to it.

Loosening the Knot.

By means of the tackle on the mast, the great bag of fish is gradually hauled up until it clears the vessel's side and swings on board. A deck-hand steps forward and lays hold of the knot which closes the extremity of the net.

The Bag Opens.

At the second or third tug the knot suddenly gives way, and with an audible grunt an avalanche of fish descends, flapping and struggling, on to the deck. The latter has been divided up into pounds, by means of planks set on end, and these are speedily filled by the mass of fish.

Gutting the Fish.

The deck hands lose no time in setting about the arduous task of cleaning the catch. Wading knee-deep into the slippery mass, they ply their gory knives with amazing speed and dexterity. Cod, of which a fine specimen is seen in the picture, are beheaded and split open in readiness for salting. Haddock, plaice, and halibut are packed in ice, and so kept fresh until port is reached.

So enormous are the catches sometimes made, when the trawler happens to strike a shoal of fish, that occasionally the bag of fish is too heavy to be trusted to the tackle on the mast. When this happens, the fisherman resorts to an expedient known as "hooking out." A special opening in the net is unlaced as the bag lies alongside, and the deck-hands stand by with murderous gaffs — long poles furnished with sharp hooks. The opening in the net affords just sufficient space for one fish at a time to escape from within, and as these swim out they are gaffed and jerked on board. These spells of furious work are of short duration, but while they last the number of fish caught is almost incredible.

Hooking Out.

Deck-hands are seen lightening the load of a big bag of cod which has just been hauled in. Fish after fish is transfixed as it endeavours to swim away, and thrown on board, until the deck is piled high with the greenish mass.

A Monster of the Deep.

Sometimes the bag contains a giant halibut, such as is seen in this picture,—six feet from nose to tail, and a good ten stone or so in weight. Coal-fish, skate, lump-fish, dog-fish, and other kinds are also included in every catch, but these are generally thrown overboard as too coarse to be of market value.

Landing Cod at Kirkwall.

Cod caught upon trawlers is invariably salted, and is usually landed, on the voyage home, at Kirkwall, in the Orkney Islands, where there are numerous curing-grounds. Not much salt fish is consumed in this country (save on Ash Wednesday), but enormous quantities are exported to Spain, Italy, and other Catholic countries of South and Central Europe.

THE INFORMER

A PUBLIC SCHOOL STORY.

By FRED SWAINSON.

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell.

SYNOPSIS.

Dick Erpingham, an athletic, good-looking fellow, comes rather mysteriously to Harford, a big public school, at the age of eighteen. He has the cut of a public-school man, but will not vouchsafe any information as to his antecedents. By saving a fag, Bob Leaf, from drowning, Erpingham makes the acquaintance of the teller of the story, Firmin, a cripple, and the two become great friends. Harford's idol and celebrity is Jim Mordaunt, a brilliant bat and wicket-keeper who has been played for his county. Dr. Forder, the Head Master, suspects Mordaunt of having attended a race-meeting, and as Erpingham (who had been up to London for an examination) was a passenger in the train by which Mordaunt must have returned, the Head asks him whether he saw Mordaunt in the train. This after Mordaunt had denied having been to the races. After a momentary hesitation Erpingham admits that he saw Mordaunt in the race-train. Mordaunt then confesses to having attended the races, and there is a general feeling in the school that he will be expelled. Needless to say, the school is astounded and infuriated beyond measure by Erpingham's action—and the case against him looks all the blacker by reason of the mystery attached to him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SENTENCE.

ON the morrow Erpingham and I walked down the High together to first school. Dick had a black eye, and I had a cheek which, I hope, did not look so bad as it felt. When Erpingham went into Asquith's class-room the Fifth were already there in full force. The talking stopped dead as he entered: the Fifth looked Erpingham up and down as they might have examined some foul animal. As they spotted his swollen face a little jeering laugh broke out here and there, but Erpingham stalked on to his seat, outwardly as quiet and unconcerned as ever. Then the laugh died away and turned to hissing, a storm of venomous wrath. Erpingham put his hands in his pockets, leaned back, and stared solemnly at the walls through it all. Asquith rustled in, and, because he was by way of being a hard beak, modelled on Forder, contrived to fix a lot of attention on himself.

For second school Forder assembled Harford seniors in Big School. We all knew what that meant. Jim Mordaunt was going to be drummed out from amongst us. There was not in that crowd of seniors one fellow who did not feel sick at heart for Mordaunt. I was the only one who felt sick at heart for Dick as well.

Forder spoke for ten minutes about some scholarship returns—things not very exhilarating at the best of times, but now unspeakably dreary. From this he announced that Sir Philip Aston had been elected to the board of governors, vice Mr. King-Baylis, resigned. At this we squirmed. Finally, Forder said, slowly and quietly, weighing every word he spoke: "James Mordaunt of Mr. Crosse's house has been relieved of his monitorship. I suppose you all know the reason of this step?" At this, as though the seniors had been moved by a single string, they slewed round in their places and covered Dick with a look of utter contempt. The sharp rustle as they moved was followed by a dead silence—the most

ominous silence I ever experienced at Harford. Dick was screwed up, as it were, to the top pitch, and did not move a muscle. Forder went on: "This is the first time since I have been Head Master here that this particular offence in a senior has not been punished by expulsion, and I assure you others that the course I now take is not in the slightest degree due to any superlative merit that I have been able to find in James Mordaunt. My opinion of him he knows, though you probably do not share it. That is all."

We went out in silence, leaving Forder talking to Wren, the school captain. A huge gasp of relief went up as we scattered into schools; Mordaunt was still amongst us, if he would. That was a thing to be thankful for, and almost accounted for Wren's cheerful face as we filed out. I found myself puzzling over three things. What had made Forder so unaccountably lenient? Would Jim stay on, degraded and deposed? What would the school do?

Crosse's soon settled that: they gave Harford a plain lead. Dick was treated as a pariah; the seniors passed him by in silent, cold disdain, more cutting in its chill aloofness than any rowdy outbreak could have been. They asked for no explanations—they didn't seem to want any: apparently they weren't even interested in his treason, and for any outward sign displayed they weren't even interested in him. For senior Harfordians he didn't exist.

The juniors, though this must have cost them many a pang, played up to the high serene game of the seniors. They didn't yelp, they didn't make strange noises as Dick hurried up and down the High. They moved off the pavement, elaborately, instead. That was all. And, somehow, this cool and calm way of treating Erpingham was not without its dignity. You felt they were doing the thing in the right way; just as you don't expect a duchess to bandy incivilities with a cook.

I, as Dick's friend, was not scouted utterly. Crosse's were decidedly cool, and Harford generally seemed "surprised at me"; but as I had never, from circumstances, been of much account in the school, what I, an unconscionable, might do didn't affect them much. But they made a point of never seeing me when I was with Dick.

It is idle to speculate on what would have happened to Erpingham if Jim had had to go. I am certain Crosse's would have got out of hand. As it was, after dinner, the house, without any definite notice, held a meeting. Neither Jim nor Erpingham was there. Bolton, Cooper, and Barry all said practically the same thing, and Kent was there with his smile and his rasping tongue, and the kids cheered wildly—so wildly that Crosse must have felt just a trifle uneasy about the resolutions. Bolton spoke up for Jim as a friend should, held up his services to the house and compared them with Erpingham's, said Jim had lifted Crosse's to the top of the tree and Dick had made the house a by-word in Harford, and wanted to know why in the name of all the gods Erpingham had selected their school for the display of his peculiar talent. The sense of the house might feebly show itself by sending Erpingham to Coventry.

Here I tapped ironically with my crutch.

Cooper followed, and then Barry, an Irishman, let himself be overcome by the contemplation of Erpingham's treason. "The fellow's a sneakin' smug, and must have been kicked out of his last school for dirty sneakin', too. Let's tell the fellow we'll never speak to him from this minute."

I rose for Dick, as Bolton had risen for Jim, and the fellows heard me more patiently than I expected. What I could say didn't amount to much, but I addressed a mild inquiry as to whether all those who cheered so easily would have answered much differently if Forder had asked them exactly as he asked Erpingham (interruptions). It was all rot talking loosely about why Erpingham was here. Forder was satisfied, apparently, and that was sufficient for me. If any one posed as a more rigid moralist than the Head, I should be glad to sit at his feet "and learn of a noble man." I didn't believe that Crosse's sheltered such a one. The fellows could do what they liked about sending him to Coventry, but I thought they were foolish in thinking that the lack of their conversation would be a stinging punishment for Erpingham. I had heard smugging mentioned. After all, what did fellows come to Harford for? Erpingham was using his time in school as it ought to be used. They honestly believed Erpingham was a dirty sneak: I believed honestly that he was an honourable fellow, and that we hadn't the proper standpoint to judge him. I should be no party to the Coventry business. And though this had nothing to do with Erpingham's case, I had heard no one say a word about Jim's rotten idea of going to the Downs. I would like to have Kent's opinion on that.

"I'll tell it you, Toothpick, pretty soon," said Kent.

Bolton put the proposition to the house. There was no need to put my amendment,

because it had not been seconded ; but Bolton did, and I was glad he did. "Those who are in favour of Firmin's views, please signify." Among the juniors up went one hand. It was

KENT.

young Leaf's. I thought his fellows would scrag him on the spot, but Kent blandly inquired if he wished to make a highly superior speech on the merits of sneaking foreigners. That little sarcasm saved Leaf, for in the jeers at my expense he was forgotten.

"No, I don't, Kent," he shouted, "but there's a rotten mistake somewhere. Erpingham's no more a sneak than—than—than I am. I'll never believe that."

I left Crosse's fellows streaming out of the Hall, and went up to Erpingham's. My hand was on the door when I heard Kent's voice behind me.

"No hurry, Firmin," said he, in his slow, heavy voice. "Is your friend in ? I've got my opinion cut and dried for him."

Somehow, I didn't worry much about what Kent thought on any matter, and I was sure enough that he couldn't rouse Dick as Jim had done.

"I'm here, Kent," said Dick, pushing back his chair and standing on the hearth-rug. Erpingham looked at his visitor, solemn as a judge. "What do you want ? "

"One or two things," said Kent. "Did you know that I was with Jim at the races ? "

"I didn't."

"You can go to Forder now and put it straight, you know."

"It's worth considering," said Erpingham, quietly.

"And something else is worth considering, too," sneered Kent, "and that concerns yourself."

"That is real nice of you, Kent," said Dick. "Won't you have a chair ? "

"Have you ever had a real good hiding, Erpingham ? "

"I have," said Dick, "twice. Black eyes, and all the trimmings ; but . . ."

Erpingham's smile was as bitter as any in Kent's armoury.

"Well, we may see about another one of these fine days, Mister Erpingham."

Dick did not take his eyes off Kent as the latter purred along in his own slow way. I had had my eyes opened more than a little as to Kent's character by yesterday's happenings, but, though I now know him to have been one of the most dangerous fellows in Harford, my opinion of him in one respect never changed—he was as brave as a lion.

"This is all rot, Kent," said I, cutting in.

"Beastly rotten, Toothpick. I've said as much. Jim won't forget it ; nor I. Oh ! Jim's staying on. But we want to know just what sort of cloistered saint Mr. Erpingham is. The fellow who jackals for beaks must have a sweet record. We're all wondering what it is. Won't you tell us, Erpingham ? Why did you come to Harford ? We're most anxious."

I wasn't prepared for what followed. Dick had fenced with Kent coolly, not to say non-

chalantly ; had thrown back Bill's very tone, and was as indifferent to any of his gibes as I. But at Kent's last words his eyes shifted from the speaker's face, and I caught the glance in them. The contemptuous indifference had gone, and, instead, there was something very like fear. All in a moment he looked fearfully ill. Kent saw he had struck home, and a savage satisfaction sounded in his voice.

"Ah!" he went on, in his silkiest voice, "Why did you come to Harford, Mr. Erpingham? That's perhaps worth considering, too, isn't it? All but hounded Jim out of the school, and is, like enough, a plaster-saint himself. What about your friend now, Toothpick? Well, I'm going. I don't value threats, not so much as that"—Kent snapped his fingers contemptuously—"but when we know where he comes from we'll know why. And, as I told you last night, then he can look out."

Kent went as quiet as a mouse, and left us alone. Dick said nothing: he sank into his chair and buried his head in his hands. Into such trouble as Jim's friend had plunged him I couldn't enter. I could not help him. But whatever was the wretched mystery, I can lay my hand on my heart and say that, even at that moment when he sank into his chair and I looked at his ghastly face, my faith in him never wavered. Nothing mean, whatever it was.

CHAPTER VII.

BOB LEAF'S STORY.

ON the morrow, outwardly at least, Erpingham was the quiet, reserved fellow I had come to respect and like, but that he was sick at heart and miserable his untasted breakfast showed. I had made up my mind not to say anything more—good, bad, or indifferent—of the Gleam business, and, though Dick's empty plate tempted me to speak, I kept silence, as I think, wisely. The only remedy for heart sickness that I know is—work. If Dick, now that the examination was over, employed his leisure in brooding over his wretched affairs, I could see it would be better for him to cut Harford altogether, for he was indeed screwed up to the breaking-point. So I said, as I poured out my last cup of coffee: "You'll be taking the next London exam., Dick?"

"Yes," he said, coming out of a brown study, "if I've passed—which I haven't."

"Well, I've got an idea you have; but you'll know definitely in a month or so, eh?"

"Oh, I'm ploughed right enough, and needn't wait for official notice, Frank, so I'll go on, I think, with the old horror."

"That would be better than nothing," thought I; but as I ran over in my mind's eye Dick's papers and what he confessed to doing in the exam., I fancied I'd urge him to the higher game. "Nothing venture, nothing have, Dick. What would you take in the Intermediate Arts?"

"Classics, Maths., English, and French. May I be buried alive if I touch your science—eugh! your science again, Dick."

I almost laughed at the violent indigestion my tabloid dose of science had given Erpingham. "Then let us order the books at Provand's as we go to second school, and if you've no objection I'll read with you for the Arts, barring anything before 5.30 in the morning. It will keep us from—" (I almost forgot myself here) "out of mischief."

Erpingham flushed with pleasure. "Jove! Jim, I'm game, though they'll whip me back again to the first mark in a month's time."

"Don't believe it, but anyhow, let's have a good grind over the Art syllabus. You've got one, eh?"

Erpingham, for a fellow who considered he was a certain failure, had been rather foreseeing, for he produced this from his inside pocket, where it lay remarkably handy, I thought, and, together, cheek by jowl, we ran over the formal, precise wording of the university syllabus. This sort of work was always interesting enough for me, and even Dick's gloomy eyes brightened and his lifeless voice rose into a more natural key as I pattered on. For one hour at least, in schemes of study, proposals and counter-proposals, and all the dovetailing of routine work, our minds had something different in the way of mental food to work upon. In the end, *en route* for second school we ordered a perfect little library at Provand's; and, comparatively easier in my mind, I hoped that work and time would help us to bury all our bitter memories.

But for me, at any rate, as you will see, there was to be no respite from Erpingham's affairs. I was on this Saturday overhauling my casts after tea, waiting for Erpingham, who was writing a letter in his study, to go up river as usual, when Bob Leaf came in.

"I say, Firmin, I've something awfully important to tell you," said my fag, closing my study door as he spoke.

"What is it?"

"It's about Erpingham."

"Well, to tell the truth, Bob, I feel just now

as though I'd had enough of Erpinghamania. But—anyhow, what is it ?"

"He comes here from Stonehurst."

I slewed round to see if my door was really shut. "For heaven's sake, Bob, not so loud ! From Stonehurst ! How do you know ?"

"Rummiest go I ever heard of, Firmin," said Bob, almost squirming on my chair from wonder, amusement, and what looked suspiciously like embarrassment. "Jolly funny."

"Oh well, get on, Bob," said I, anxiously. "Does any one else know ?"

"Not a soul here," said young Leaf, confidently.

"Bob," said I, hastily, "give me your word you'll tell no one what you've told me."

"Rather not," said he; and then he added, scornfully: "Did you think I meant to ?"

"I'm past thinking," said I, in helpless bewilderment. "From Stonehurst, eh ?" When I heard the name of that old grey school whose walls have sheltered some of England's greatest men, whose old streets have echoed to the boyish voices of those whose names are a part of English history, I remembered Mordaunt's words: "From some public school, of course. He's exactly our run."

Bob started hastily. "This afternoon I rode over on my bike to Cotsfold Bridge, just for the spin and to watch those trout in the Bridge Pool, you know" (I knew those lazy monsters well enough), "and when I was coming back through the wood-road I almost ran into some people who had had a spill. Two girls, Firmin," said Bob, making a delicate pause.

"I hear," said I, blandly.

"They had managed to lift off a wheel of their governess cart—one of those horrid yellow, joggy things that shake you about like a pea in a bottle—against the stone post of that middle gate in the wood. When I got there the bigger girl was holding the pony's head and the younger was trying to get the traces loose. Both of them were in a beastly funk—I could see that. The girl who was holding the pony was moaning as though the bottom of the world had fallen out.

"'Oh ! Yolande. Isn't it unfastened yet ? Whatever shall we do ?" she said.

"I got off and had the pony out of the shafts in two minutes, and the way the beggar turned round and looked at the damage when he was free was a caution. The girls and I managed to pull the cart off the road on to the grass. They kept on saying they were awfully obliged to me.

"'Are you hurt ?' I said.

"'Not a scrap,' said the girl called Yolande. 'And you, Agnes ?'

"'No, I don't think so,' said Agnes. 'But I thought you'd never stop rolling.'

"Yolande said: 'Well, I stopped as soon as I could, Agnes.'

"I laughed at this, Firmin," explained Bob, as though he fancied I might not think he had done justice to the occasion. "Then Agnes said: 'Well, Yolande, we've had a miraculous escape. I *said* you were sending Tartar along too quick. I was afraid something would happen. Why ever——'

"'I told you why,' said Agnes. 'I promised father I would be back by five in time to say good-bye, and now I shall miss him.'

"'Pon my honour, Firmin, I thought she was going to cry. Then she turned to me and said quickly: 'How far is it to Harford, please ?'

"'Six miles,' I said.

"'Could I run it before five ?'

"I told her it was jolly well impossible. I never heard of any girl running six miles in forty-five minutes. She turned from me and looked at my bicycle. 'If that had only been a lady's !' she said.

"I said: 'Well, *I* shouldn't have been here, that's all.'

"The girl didn't seem to care a hang about the pretty complete smash-up; all she worried about was getting home in time. After she had stood poking the gravel about with the toe of her boot for a couple of minutes, she came up to me and said: 'Will you take me home on your step ? It is awfully important.'

"'Yolande !' says the other girl, quite shocked.

"'I mean it,' says Yolande. 'Will you take me ?'

"'Rather,' I said, and I fairly gurgled.

"She got on, and I plugged away," went on Bob, "and, except for that stiff bit up Combe Hill, when she hopped off light as a bird and ran alongside, she was there behind me steady as a rock and sometimes was so quiet that I thought I'd dropped her somewhere. We met almost no one, and" (this very fervently) "none of our fellows. Their house is that big place with the white lodge gates just before you get into Harford. Their meadows go down to the river."

I nodded: "Yorke's."

"Yes. I had done the five odd miles in forty minutes and was pretty warm, I can tell you; but the girl was no end jubilant when she found she had a few minutes to spare. She thanked me, told me Agnes was her cousin, asked my

name, and told me hers. It seems her father was going abroad for some time, and she wanted to see him off at the station.

"'I wouldn't have failed,' she said, quite savagely, 'for almost anything.'

"I was just swinging on again to get in for call-over when she said, 'Do you know Dick Erpingham?'

"'Oh! rather,' I said.

"'Why did he leave Stonehurst to come to Harford?' she said.

"That fairly staggered me. There was no time for any more, so I just called out: 'Don't know—except we're the better place.'

"She laughed and waved her hand to me as she cut up the drive, and I pedalled like mad for call-over—and just missed it. Two hundred of the best, Firmin."

Bob's lines did not seem to worry him a morsel, I noticed; and when Erpingham came in he had gone to do them as a giant about to run his course.

Curiously enough, as we went up stream, Dick said to me: "Whose is that boat-house, Frank?"

"Yorke's."

"Snug little place," he said, indifferently.

From Dick's tone I gathered that, whatever Miss Yolande Yorke might know of him, he certainly knew nothing of her. Keeping to my resolution of the morning, I said nothing of what Bob had told me, but the worry of knowing he had been at Stonehurst spoiled my hand, and the Barl trout benefited, I may say, by the fact.

When I got back from the river I found a letter awaiting me, come by the evening post. It was from Mrs. Mordaunt. I am not going to say what was in it, but it was blotted with tears—with tears, I am sure. When I got to the end I almost wished I had never seen Erpingham.

I had not seen Jim to speak to since I interfered between him and Dick; but now, driven by the memory of our old friendship—a friendship that had meant a lot to me—and that blinding letter, I went into his study. I was cut to the heart at the sight of him: if any one realised his fall, Jim did. He got up out of his chair, but did not put me in it in his own kindly fashion, and, indeed, I should have thought little of him if he had. Instead, he said: "What is it, Frank?"

I was wondering how to begin what I meant to say when he saved me the trouble, "Look here, Frank, a friend of Erpingham's is no friend of mine. You must choose, old man."

"I am Erpingham's friend, but——"

"Then you're not mine, Frank."

"And I believe, Jim, I'm no less yours as well, far more than those who would lynch Erpingham if they got the chance."

"I'm not going to argue the case, Frank. I was an ass. Granted, I've paid. Erpingham's a sneak, and he'll pay, too, I hope. Good heavens! man, would I have sneaked of him?" said Jim, his voice ringing with scorn. "I'd have sent Forder to Jericho first. But, as you were the only fellow to see it, I'll say to you, Frank, that I almost came down to his level when I struck him, and I'm sorry for that; and I was so nearly mad that night that I came to taunting him, as one cad another, and I'm sorry for that, too. But Erpingham is what he is, and there's an end of it. If you're his friend, you're not mine."

"Jim," I said falteringly, "after all these years, this won't do."

"Frank," said Jim, looking me square in the eyes, his handsome face touched with scorn, "we've all got to take sides in this world. So have you."

"I'm Erpingham's friend," said I, flushing under Jim's disdain.

"Then good-night, Frank," said he, quietly.

"And, Jim, though you're throwing me off— "

"I'm not," he said kindly.

"I'll say one word. Epsom was Kent's idea. Kent will do you no good, old man."

"Ah," said Jim, bitterly, "that is worthy of Erpingham's friend." He held the door open for me, and pride forbade me to stay longer after that. I hobbled out, leaving Jim as white as paper in his fierce scorn and wretchedness. I had never bargained for this, after all these years. When was the wretched business to end?

Five fathoms deep in misery, I went to bed.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INCIDENT OF THE EXPRESS.

ON the Monday Dick and I settled our long grind for the London examination, and in the work found something of a remedy for our troubles. By the time Saturday came round we were in full cry. Also, making the best of a wretched business—which, by the way, Kent called "brazening it out," though, indeed, it was very far from that—we went down to Meads as usual on Saturday. Jim was fielding in the country, not caring to risk his damaged hand behind the stumps, and, because he did everything well, two lovely skimming catches taken with the left hand just as you thought

the ball had outsped the man remain in my memory as though he had brought them off but yesterday. And that ripple of Harfordian applause running round the benches! You compared—and you said there was really no comparison—the honest stop and return, the rough pad work on the leg side, and the heavy lurching sweep at the bails of Milligan, who was keeping, with the polished art of Jim; you put Jim's white figure and all the clean, easy, graceful skill it stood for in place of Milligan's solid heaviness and uncultured toil, and wondered what a vast difference a single split finger made in Harford's game. The Foresters piled up runs *ad lib.*, and when we found Jim did not come out as usual to open the school innings, we got up and went for tea. As we walked across the water-meadows towards the boat-house afterwards, we heard from the distant field a roar of cheering: it rose and fell in a kind of lilt for fully a minute and then broadened out into a universal yell. Dick looked at me with a swift, comprehending glance.

"Jim Mordaunt coming out to bat," said I.

"I thought so," said he. And we paused to listen to the school's welcome to its idol booming across the quiet meadows.

When Dick and I were coming into Crosse's, we found young Anson waiting for me. He was not in Harfordian garb, though from force of habit his hat was tilted to the back of his head, as though it had been his school cap. He was very splendid, and I'm sure his mamma would have been proud of him, though she might possibly have hinted a doubt as to his tie. But Arthur's face was by no means in keeping with his silk attire; so to speak, it was wreathed in crape and funereal weeds. His first words were: "Oh, Firmin, I'm in an awful row."

"Are you?" said I, contemplating his gorgeous figure, and not somehow associating it with anything awful. "Well, come up, and make a clean breast of it."

Dick took young Anson in with his good-humoured smile. "If it's assault and battery, Frank, we must bail him out. Tell me when it's all over."

I put Anson in my chair, and sat contemplating him, as I had done young Leaf the week before.

"Well, what have you done?"

"Stopped the Aberdeen express, at Harford, Firmin. The one with the two engines."

"The six o'clock out of Gleam?"

"Yes."

"Well, whatever made you do that?" said I, fairly gasping.

"Well, we—I got in the wrong train, Firmin."

"We? Whom did you go with?"

"No one, Firmin."

"Look here, Arthur," said I sternly. "I want you to make a clean breast of it."

"Oh! so I will, Firmin," said Anson, forlornly.

"Start at the beginning," said I.

Anson pulled himself together with a visible effort. "I went up to Gleam to-day, with Forder's special *exeat*, to take that music examination—it's awful footle, really, Firmin, but Kitty took it, and Mater wanted me to. There were loads of others there, mostly girls, and we waited until our names were called out and then we went into different rooms, and a professor heard us play a sight piece and that thing of Raff's which everybody knows by heart."

"I don't," said I.

"Well, I'll play it for you if you like, Firmin," said Arthur.

"Serves me right for interrupting, Arthur. Go on."

"They started with M's and worked towards A's and Z's, and consequently I was about the last called, and I got into the wrong room, where some girl was wanted and where they bundled me out; she sniggered; and, finally, I got away to the station about six. It was the slowest performance, Firmin, you can imagine—as dull as ditchwater. I asked a porter which was the train, and he said: 'First out, Number Two, Sir.' A train came in—two engines, diner, conductor in gold lace, all complete; and if I'd only thought half a second I'd have known it wasn't the Harford stopping train, and that the porter was the usual ass. However, just as I was getting in, a girl hurried up, the same girl who had smiled when I came sailing into the wrong room, Firmin, and said: 'Oh! please'—she'd been hurrying and was almost out of breath—'is this the Harford train?'

"I said 'Yes,' and she got in.

"I followed her, Firmin," added Anson, miserably. "She asked me how I'd got on in the examination, and, just as she was telling me she'd made a hash of Raff because the girl before her had been weeping over the keys, and I had chucked down the *Sketch* to listen to her, the express swam out without a sound.

"The girl was the first to spot the mistake. We went sliding through Bulkington, and when she saw it she said: 'Why, my cousin was to get in here.'"

Something familiar struck me here, as though Arthur were telling me a tale I'd heard before,

and I said: "Don't know the name, Arthur, do you?"

"Yorke," said Anson.

For the life of me I couldn't help the laugh which burst from me. Miss Yorke was a young lady who, apparently, lived in accidents, but it was rather a coincidence that the chronicle of her doings should be retailed to me on two succeeding Saturdays.

"I've heard of her before, Arthur," said I. "Her destiny seems to be to get young Harfordians into scrapes."

"It wasn't her fault," said Arthur, instinctively sticking up for Yolande, as Leaf had done, and at this second coincidence I laughed again.

"Go on," said I, becoming serious again and not altogether for show either. Stopping the Aberdonian is no joke.

"THERE WAS AN AWFUL ROW."

"'We're in the wrong train, I believe,' I said to the girl. 'All locals stop at Bulkington.' And I turned up my time-table.

"'We've got into the Scotch Express, I fancy,' I said.

"'Where does it stop?' she asked, no end anxious.

"'Crewe.'

"She gave a moan and then said: 'Whatever made you say it was the Harford train?'

"'The beastly porter said it was.'

"'Well, what are we to do?' she said.

"I couldn't say anything to comfort her. I saw nothing for it but going on to Crewe. Then, as we rushed past the little wood before the signal-box she gave me a sort of look of desperation and glanced at the gilt chain above the door. Before I knew just what I was doing, I had clutched that chain and pulled it down as far as it would come. All the brakes went on at once, the train pulled up at Harford, and we both jumped out like a shot.

"There was an awful row. The people in the train put out their heads and gaped, and the station-master kicked up no end of a fuss. Then the engine gave a whistle, the guard said something to the station-master, and the train cleared out. We went into the station-master's office and explained things—especially about the porter. He took down our names, and told us that the Aberdonian had run for years and years without a stop and that we'd smashed her record, that undoubtedly the company would prosecute me, and the girl for aiding and abetting, that Forder should know, and Harbour, and I'd be

kicked out of the school. He was in no end of a paddy all through. Then he opened the door, and the girl said quite sweetly: 'Good afternoon, Mr. Salt.'

"He looked at her for half a moment, and then raised his hat politely, and said, 'Good evening, Miss Yorke.'

"We cleared out then, and I told the girl how beastly sorry I was to have landed her in such a mess, but she didn't seem to mind a hang. Then we said good-bye, and—that's all."

"Quite sure, Arthur?" said I, half-worried, half-amused.

"Ye-es," said Anson, hesitatingly.

"You're on your honour," said I, warningly.

"Oh! well," said Arthur, with a jerk, "she said I was an awfully decent fellow and she liked my tie."

I twisted, despite myself, in helpless laughter, and Anson blinked solemnly and blushed alternately upon my levity.

"Arthur," said I at last, "your Miss Yorke is a *lusus naturæ*. Here's pen and ink. Write home and let your father know."

"And Forder?" asked Arthur, quaking, as he mentioned our "just beast."

"Well, you'll have to tell him," said I, "as soon as the letter's finished. That's certain. Now write."

I took him to Forder's, and when he came out I own I looked sharply at the youngster. He was rather pale.

"Well?"

"He said I was an idiot, I think," said Arthur cheerfully. And then he added, still more cheerfully: "I never said a word about the girl, Firmin."

"True blue, old man," said I, gurgling, as I limped away.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BOYCOTTING OF BOB LEAF.

SINCE Bob Leaf had openly championed Erpingham at that heated meeting of Crosse's house he had had a particularly lively time among his fellows—as lively as juniors could make it. They weren't going to let him run counter to universal school opinion without showing him their sense of his error, and they did so in the direct, uncompromising manner which has ever been fashionable in fagdom. Thus, if Bob asked for salt at dinner-table he didn't get it. He had to reach for it himself. There was nothing half-hearted in the unpoliteness of his next-hand neighbour. Bob stood this rather doubtfully for a day or two, then, like a sensible fellow, after surveying his foes individually and collectively, drew up his plan of campaign.

"Pass the salt, Harris, please," said he, one day.

Harris took no notice, elaborately, but next moment almost jumped off his chair. Bob's boot had caught him neatly on the ankle. "Salt, please, Harris," said Bob. "Thought you didn't hear."

"Oh, you pig, Leaf," murmured Harris.

"Hurry up," said Bob quietly, putting down his knife and fork and giving Harris a look which spoke the whole Newgate calendar.

"Shan't," said Harris.

Bob's boot went into action again, very quietly but effectively. "I'm waiting," he said grimly, still eyeing Harris truculently.

Harris blinked the tears back and visibly hesitated, and of course this is fatal. He passed the salt. "Thanks," murmured Bob sweetly, as he resumed on his mutton. Then, when he had allowed time for his little attentions to Harris to sink in, he took up his parable again. "Everybody—especially little Harrises—shall be polite. I'll tweak your long nose, Harris, after dinner, if you don't pass me the mustard—instanter."

Harris clutched the cruet hastily and set it down with a rattle before Bob, and the eyes of Crosse's fagdom spotted the little byplay in a flash. Leaf gazed amiably round the long table; then he murmured to Harris: "I don't take mustard with mutton, Harris, really, but that was *par exemple*."

"You'll see, you beastly cad, after dinner," murmured the outraged Harris.

"I mean to, as soon as the seniors are out," said Bob.

When we had gone out Bob shut the dining-room door. "I've barked Harris' shins for him, and I'm going to do the same to any of you who isn't decently civil and doesn't speak when he's spoken to."

"Oh no, you're not," shouted Robinson. "We're not going to have anything to do with you. You're in Coventry."

"Rot," said Bob calmly, keeping his back to the wall. "What have I done?"

"Erpingham!" burbled the juniors, as though that word meant crime unspeakable.

"Fag and toady to Toothpick and his rotten friend."

"I'd black Erpingham's boots if he asked me," said Bob. "He's as good a fellow as Jim Mordaunt any day, and you'll find that out pretty soon. I know it already. Didn't he save Anson's life, and perhaps mine, too?"

"What a catch for Harford!" shouted a voice on the rear of the encircling crowd.

"I'll pull your nose for that, Faulder," said Bob, "if you'll come here."

"Scrag him," said Faulder viciously, and twenty eager youngsters only wanted one spirit among them whose pluck was equal to the lad's who was bullying them to have made short work of Master Bob. But no one, except Harris, had any particular wrong to avenge, and Harris, as Bob knew, didn't count, and therefore, though a score pair of eyes glared fiercely on him, no one led an attack. Bob showed no white feather, though a severe mauling was probably nearer than he knew.

"Listen, you fellows," he said solemnly; "if you scrag me I'll take each of you separately as I can get you, if I wait a year for it. That's all. And if I speak to you civilly I want a civil answer. I haven't anything else to say."

Bob went out, and Crosse's juniors made no attempt to stop him. Some of them saw, I fancy, that Bob at least had cause to be thankful to Erpingham, and all recognised his pluck; but in school-life, prejudice, when it is seen as school honour, is strong as iron bands. They buzzed and burbled over Bob's open defiance until King said: "Strikes me we needn't go further with Bob than Jim does with Erpingham. He passes him the salt, Harris."

"Then you can jolly well pass Leaf it, King," growled Harris. "He'll hack you before you can say 'knife.'"

"Oh no, he can't, Bertie," said King, soothingly. "I can say 'knife' awfully quick. And, I say, have you fellows thought what Bob means to our cricket? There's no bowler in Crosse's lot worth mentioning beside him."

"I'd rather lose every match without him," said Faulder, hotly, "than win 'em all with him."

"That's because you're an ass, Patrick," said King's friend Fawcett, judicially.

"Well, I'm captain," said Rudge, "and he isn't going to play if I know it."

"All right, Teddy," said King, "that settles it. We may not be making a mistake, after all. Have it your own way."

Now it so happened that Leaf was at that moment getting into his flannels, as he was keen as mustard on cricket, and Crosse's juniors were settling with Forder's Third XI. that afternoon. Before he went down to Long Meads he strolled up to Crosse's grille to see if Rudge's chosen band were such as he approved of. He rubbed his eyes, hardly believing he had really read aright. His own name wasn't there! No. The eleven best juniors in Crosse's were, apparently, Rudge, King, Fawcett, Faulder, Baylis, Robinson, Lyon, Coleman, Braithwaite, Rogers, and Harris—*and* Harris. Then Bob turned furiously on his heel and sought out Rudge in his study. Rudge was screwing spikes into his boots when Leaf burst in.

"I say, Rudge, why's my name not on the eleven list?"

"Because you're not playing."

"Why?"

"You aren't chosen," said Rudge, screwing away.

"And Harris is?" said Leaf, his voice trembling with rage and scorn.

"His name's down."

"I'm not going to be done out of my cricket, Rudge," said Leaf in a white rage.

"I'm captain," replied Rudge.

"You're captaincy won't save your front teeth unless you strike off Harris' name and put mine down."

Leaf meant exactly what he said, and Rudge, a decent cricketer, though not very heavy metal, saw it, and found the difference between argument with Leaf alone and *coram populo*. He looked at Bob sulkily. "All right."

"Come on, then," said Bob, and, under the fierce eye of my fag, Rudge slowly scored out Harris' name and put down Bob's.

In Long Meads that afternoon a little drama was played out. Forder's juniors were there in full panoply, but Crosse's held a brief, fierce debate within the far pavilion. They struck against Leaf's playing—eight of the ten, which is a triumphant majority. Bob glared round at his fellow juniors, recognised his helplessness, and flung out. He was beaten. One must knuckle under to numbers, after all. Going out of Long Meads he met Anson.

"Playing, Bob?"

"No," said Bob, briefly.

"Then let's scull up the river, as far as Hunter's Leap. I was looking for you."

"I'm game, Arthur," said Bob.

As they were sculling past Yorke's boathouse, a fresh and cheery voice hailed them.

"That's Yolande," said Leaf.

"Jove! so it is," said Anson.

"You know her?" asked Bob, in utter astonishment.

"Rather," said Arthur. "Do you?"

"I should just think so," said my fag, with a chuckle.

"Oh! do come in, please, for five minutes," shouted the girl.

"Rather," shouted both in chorus.

When I came down stream that afternoon

(it was the opening day of the coarse fishing, I remember, and I had unfeelingly left Dick working in his den), I glanced curiously across at Yorke's boathouse as I turned the bend.

I saw a girl leaning over the end of a punt, her chin propped upon both hands, and, in a school skiff drawn alongside, Leaf and Anson. The sound of boyish voices and girlish laughter floated out of the cool gloom of the boathouse. The dip of my sculls made the girl look up, and I heard her say (you know how water carries sound): "Who's that, Arthur?"

"Firmin," said Anson.

Then I heard Bob say: "Jove! if old Frank's coming down, it's near enough call-over for us. What's the time, Arthur?"

Arthur murmured something, and Bob said hastily: "We'll have to pull for it. I'd no idea!"

The boys doffed their caps to their friend, pushed away, and then, giving me a demure "wafture of the hand," sculled headlong down the river. A sudden thought struck me, and I came across stream to the boathouse. It was an abominably rude thing to do, and I can only plead that I've never done anything similar since, though, as I afterwards knew, Miss Yolande was excuse enough for anything. I pulled my skiff into the shadow of the boathouse, and she, getting up and kneeling on the cushions, contemplated me with honest frank curiosity. I raised my hat, and murmured "Miss Yorke?"

"Yes," she said, bubbling with mirth in a moment. "And you are Firmin. The boys have told you about me."

Her jolly smile made it delightfully easy to talk to her. "Oh, rather," and I laughed.

"Well, haven't you come across to lecture me—like Agnes?"

"Not at all," said I, "but—"—and she saw in a moment I was serious enough—"I want you to do me a great favour, if you will."

"I will, if I can," she said promptly.

Then, steadying my skiff against her punt, I told her that Dick had told none of us that he came from Stonehurst, and that, whatever his reasons were, and I was sure they were honourable (she nodded here), he did not want us to know that yet.

"And I have told Bob," she said with a gasp.

"And he has told me," said I.

"And three cannot keep a secret."

"Oh, but we will, you and Bob and I."

"I'll never breathe a word. I knew from Erpingham's cousin Maud that he had come here from Stonehurst. She wrote me: 'Did I know him?' as though I knew every Harfordian. But I don't know why."

"Nobody does," said I, and I just hinted that Erpingham wasn't popular.

She was awfully quick in taking all in, and she said: "I am sorry I ever said a word."

"No harm's done," said I, relieved more than I could tell her.

"And what about poor Arthur and that wretched train?" she asked me, with a little blush.

"No news from the front yet," said I, laughing. As I looked at her honest brown eyes, pretty face, and girlish figure, I could quite understand why Arthur had stopped the Aberdonian. Bob would have stopped the Flying Dutchman on half a look at a communication cord.

"You'll let me know when there is, won't you?" said Yolande, throwing her cushions on to the grass as I pushed away.

"I will, but I'm not afraid."

"Nor I," said she, promptly.

"Good-bye, Miss Yorke."

She shook her finger at me merrily. "I'm not Agnes. Yolande, please, Frank."

I felt, somehow, that I'd done as good work on the river that afternoon as I should have done over Higher Algebra.

CHAPTER X.

WREN COMES OVER.

YOUNG Anson had a letter from his father advising him to be more careful in future about express trains, and a letter from St. Eustas—a very stately letter indeed—saying that they had been in communication with his father and that they sincerely hoped he (young Anson) would never trouble their nervous system again. From which I gathered that Arthur's father had paid the fiver for "improper use" of gilt chains on flying Aberdonians.

"You'd better tell Yolande, Arthur. She'll be anxious."

"Bob and I were going over there this afternoon," said Arthur. "I'll tell her all right."

As a matter of fact, Bob and Arthur became confirmed river *habitués*, and if Crosse's juniors thought that kicking Leaf out of their cricket XI. desolated his heart, they made a vast mistake. Bob became almost oppressively cheerful, and oppressively particular as to any lack of courtesy towards himself at table or elsewhere; and all this cheerfulness was so obviously not "put on," so obviously not "smiles hiding the aching heart," that his

old chums were puzzled and very disappointed. What is the good of cutting a fellow if he won't see it, of kicking him if he can't feel? King and Fawcett troubled Rudge and his chum Harris with choice *innuendo*.

"We're doing very well without Bob, aren't we, Rudge? We were only licked by an innings yesterday. We'll win one some day."

"About Christmas," said Fawcett.

"We've lost Bob, but we've got Harris," murmured King.

"What a catch!" sighed Fawcett, turning up his eyes like a hen drinking.

"*Oui et non, mon ami*. Did you refer to Bertie as Bertie, or to his work in the country?'

"Oh, both. It must have been Bertie's style of missing 'em that struck Rudge."

"MISS YORKE?"

"You try skipping, Bertie. Gives a fellow an eye for a likely ball," purred King.

"I only missed one yesterday," said Harris, hotly.

"Ah! Herbert, but it was the style in which you missed it!" said Fawcett admiringly.

"Never mind; Rudge is captain. First-rate man, Rudge. Can see talent, bless you, in a—well——"

"Pound o' butter," suggested Fawcett, taking his friend's arm and leaving his barbed shafts rankling in the hot and sulky skipper.

"Look here, Bert," said Rudge, "you'll have to buck up or I'll have to drop you. I'll give you half an hour's practice now—and *do* try to hold 'em."

I heard, incidentally, that Leaf and Anson had made the acquaintance of Agnes, and in due course of Mrs. Yorke, who, Bob said laughed like Yolande. Arthur, it appeared talked music to Yolande and Co., had twanged his banjo, and in dulcet tones, under the greenwood trees behind the boathouse one hot afternoon, had sung the songs of a far country—nigger ditties, to be precise. They were, Bob assured me, "ripping." "And I say, Firmin, young Anson has a lovely voice. Mrs. Yorke and Yolande say so. All sugar and cream—and he doesn't know it."

"And you, Bob? What's your department?"

"Oh! I climb trees, and get her her eggs, and all that. And, by the way, Firmin, have you any book with coloured plates? Some of the eggs we find stump us both."

I handed Bob an old, worn friend. "And what about your cricket, my son?" Bob was on trial before me at that moment.

"Well, Firmin, I ache for a game sometimes, but Rudge will have to ask me now. And,

after all, halfers up at Yorke's aren't footle, either," he added quickly.

"Shouldn't think so," I said, as I thought of Yolande.

The days flew by—fine summer days, and Dick and I held on with our Arts work: Cicero, Virgil, Plato and Sophocles, Milton and Dryden, and mathematics without end. The Fifth and Sixth were covering in classics practically the same ground, and when we had asked Forder if we might take the Arts, he had positively been pleased for five minutes. Crosse and Asquith revised our time-tables, and sometimes after tea the House Master would drop into our studies and give us the little tips that act like magic—the things you never see in books, the property of men who have spent their lives teaching from love of lads and learning.

Dick was a pariah still, of course; but my old friends Bolton, Gale, Wren, &c., were to me as they used to be. Only the break between Jim and me was definite enough, and over that thought I had many a bad half-hour. Once I met Mrs. Mordaunt on Meads: she was as kind as ever, and prattled on about Lord's and Harford as though Jim and I were the old friends. She gave Dick, who was next me watching the cricket, a quick glance, a curious look. When she rose to go I walked with her to Meads gate, and she said: "That was Erpingham, Frank, wasn't it?"

"Yes," said I.

"I like him, Frank. Good-bye."

Jim and Bill Kent were inseparables now: they clubbed together, they strolled the High together, came on the Meads together, and, though perhaps this was hardly the word for Kent's performances, worked together. Gale, Bolton, Cooper, and Crosse's seniors generally, I believe, saw little of them. To see Jim so thick with Kent added to my disgust. After Gleam I thoroughly distrusted Kent. He was always heavily jocose when he met me alone.

"How's square-toes, Toothpick?"

"Working hard, Kent. Sends his love to you."

"Is he as unctuously good as ever?"

"When he hasn't seen you for a month at least! Ask another."

"He'll see me again, never fear. He didn't tell us why he came here. We must always remember that. Some of us think of it yet."

"Intellectual occupation, Kent. Take care of your health."

"Never fear," smiled Bill.

I almost grew to hate Kent's banter, and his slow mocking smile. Have you ever seen a dog nosing a rabbit in a wall? He sniffs the shivering beastie only a foot away, and he's not content until, following his nature, he has broken its backbone. Kent reminded me of such a dog.

A day or two after that conversation with Kent I shall always remember. It was Friday, and though I had said nothing to Dick about it, I had written to my brother in town to call at the University and look over the pass list, which was due out at twelve. This would probably anticipate the official notice of the result of Dick's examination two or three days. Jack was to wire to me.

The boy brought me up the orange envelope while Dick and I were at tea. I tore it open nervously, while my friend went on calmly eating bread and butter. It was brief and to the point. "Erpingham, Richard, No. 421. Second Division."

"Something to interest you, Dick," I said, passing over the wire.

Erpingham stiffened as he read the first word; then he met my outstretched hand. He had flushed with delight and surprise.

"I say, Frank, you're an awfully decent fellow to have this wire. Jove! it's a relief," and he took a deep breath, as though he wanted to fill his lungs and breathe out all past doubt, "and a miracle."

"Miracle be hanged! If it wasn't you, Richard, it was my tabloid doses of maths. and science," said I.

"You're a second MacGuire, a prince of coaches—and the best friend a fellow could ever have."

"Steady, Dick," said I, "or I'll have to kick you out. But wasn't that a bull's-eye idea of taking the pass for granted and grinding for the Arts? Clear gain of one calendar month, which is not to be sneezed at."

"Rather, and now, Frank, I *will* tell you. I'd have been deadly sick if I had had to go over that scientific parade ground again."

"Duty first, Dick," said I. "A wire home, now, and a letter to follow. Off you go. We'll jaw our heads off after that."

Dick went, on the word, and hardly had I watched, enviously, his manly square-set figure out of my door than Wren came in. The school captain said: "Busy, Frank?"

"No," said I.

"Then come along o' me. Forder has just put up the school lists—in Big School. You'll see 'em before the crowd. Prizes, &c."

"Thanks awfully," said I, following Wren. "I suppose I'm to congratulate you, old man?"

"You may, Frank," he said, with his kindly smile. "I'm still head. But I guess I've had a squeak."

"Rot," said I. "We aren't just your metal yet, Ted, unless—well—unless Jim's been treading on your heels."

"Jim Mordaunt!" said Wren. "Ah! well, you haven't seen."

way down the Sixth—and kept it there. Eleven from the bottom was "Mordaunt." "I say, Frank, what's the meaning of this? Jim among the sweepings!"

I could only look.

"Has it struck you, old man, that Jim's been fooling the last ten weeks?"

"That's Kent, Ted," I said bitterly.

"Well, Frank, the sooner our brilliant Jim gets back on his old track the better. He's your friend. Kent's all right in the cricket-

THE TELEGRAM WAS BRIEF AND TO THE POINT.

"No, I haven't," said I, plying my crutch energetically along the pavement. Ted's tone was full of mystery.

In Big School, Wren and I had the place and the school lists to ourselves. I was second, to my utter astonishment, and Ted enjoyed my stupefaction. "You must see I've had a narrow squeak, Frank."

"But Jim! Where the dickens is Jim?"

Ted ran his finger down the list—a terrible

field, but his talents aren't conspicuous anywhere else. Can't you——"

"He's cut me."

"Ah!" said Wren; and he whistled. "That Gleam business was a bad one. And here's your friend, Erpingham. Ninth in the Fifth is pretty good for a new fellow. Forder will give him his remove, I should fancy, at the end of the term. Is he clever?"

"Very good. And he can work like a horse."

"Frank, is the school making a huge mistake over him?" asked the captain quietly.

"A better fellow than Erpingham," said I, "isn't in Harford."

"That's good enough for me, then. Can I call on you when he's in, Frank? I've always liked the look of him."

"Now," said I, preparing to move off.

But Wren wasn't to be hurried, and together we foraged up and down the lists for ten minutes or so; then, in my room, Wren and Dick and I chattered till the captain left for Asquith's. That was a day to be marked with a white stone for Dick and me. One fellow, and that fellow Wren, had come over to our side. The tide had begun to flow.

When the fellows came up from Meads the lists were besieged. Among the seniors Jim's name was on every one's lips.

"Pretty ghastly," said Cooper to Bolton.

"Forder's playing some horrible joke," said another.

"Below me!" said Barry. "Tell me it's true."

"Heard the news, Toothpick?" asked Kent in his jeering voice. "I'm last! We do work surprises, Jim and I."

"I wish you d been kicked out of the school," said I savagely.

"I stay till I see some one else kicked out first," he said sweetly.

And Jim Mordaunt!

Jim seemed indifferent—which was worst of all.

(To be continued.)

OSTRICHES OF THE DESERT TAKING THEIR FIRST OBSERVATIONS OF A NEW WORLD.
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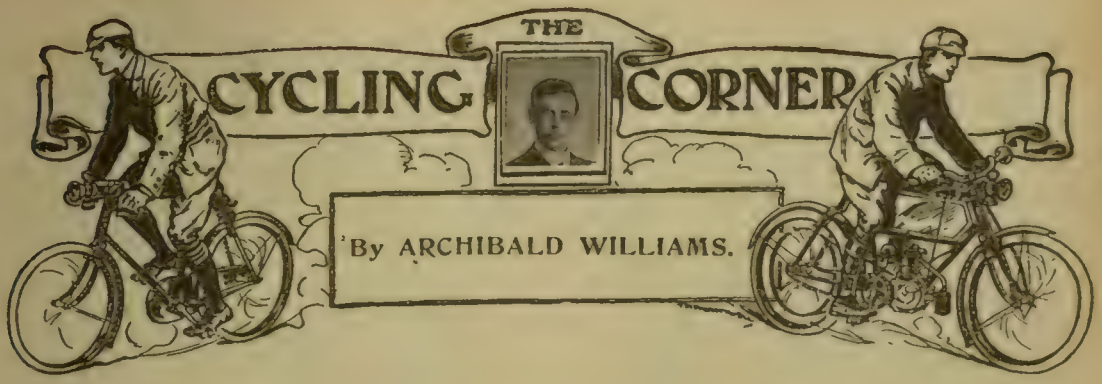


HOW A CYCLE IS MADE.

THANKS to the courtesy of the Rudge-Whitworth Cycle Co., Coventry, and the New Hudson Cycle Co., Birmingham, I am able to keep the promise made in my last article with regard to giving my readers an account of the processes through which metal has to pass before it emerges as the perfect cycle.

One often hears the old first-grade machine praised somewhat at the expense of its more modern successor, as though the newer article, though very much cheaper, were decidedly inferior to the products of a period much nearer to the great "boom." Let me, therefore, assure all who read this that the fall in prices does not imply a deterioration in quality. As a matter of fact, the reverse is the case. We hear much less nowadays of cycles "giving way" unexpectedly than we did when twenty guineas, or even more, had to be paid for a first-grade. The cheapening process is the inevitable outcome of the introduction of automatic labour-saving machinery; while increased reliability results from the experience gained through previous failures. So no one need have the least hesitation in entrusting his neck to the wares of a good firm, however moderate be their price.

All Britons may pride themselves on the fact that, in spite of the severest foreign competition, the home maker has managed to more than hold his own. This is due to the perfect organisation of big cycle factories. Everything is there arranged with an eye to economising time, which means money. The actual value of the metal out of which a cycle is made is very trifling: what we pay for is the time spent in shaping and assembling the many parts.

After this brief introduction, I will plunge right into my subject. As a starting-point I take the body of the cycle—

The Frame,

composed of a number of tubes—all cut to standard sizes by special machinery—and lugs, or hollow forgings which hold the tubes together at the angles. These last are turned in lathes till they are an exact fit for the tubes. Lugs and tubes are assembled in a frame, called a "jig," and held firmly by it while a workman drills holes through the lugs for the introduction of pins to hold the parts together during the operation of

Brazing,

which means welding them together with molten brass. In the brazing department of a factory are a number of furnaces. At each is a smith. He takes a frame or handle-bar or front fork, as the case may be, and holds it in the fierce flames till the part to be brazed is almost white hot. Then he ladles on some

FIG. 1.—The crown of a Rudge-Whitworth front fork is squeezed out of a steel plate by a series of powerful presses. This illustration shows the successive stages through which the crown passes.

Fig. 2.—The great press at the Rudge-Whitworth works, Coventry, which converts flat strips of steel into chain-stays. Notice the curious misprint in the makers' title—"makres" instead of "makers."

borax as a "flux," and as soon as that has run into the joint, pours on fine brass filings, which melt, follow the borax, and fill up even the minutest crevice. This done, he shakes off all the surplus brass, and goes on to the next joint.

When the frame has been brazed the joints must be smoothed so as to be fit for plating or enamelling. To remove the borax, scale, and rough brass edges, it was formerly the custom to use files; but now the file is replaced by

Sand-blasting.

Men cowled in queer head-pieces which suggest the Inquisition or the Vehmgericht scour the parts with very fine steel shot ejected from a nozzle by compressed air. The shot soon knock off all excrescences and produce a smooth surface. The head-dress protects the workers' lungs and eyes from the dust and shot. In front of each eye is a small window, the glass of which, so an operator in the Rudge-Whitworth works told me, has to be replaced every six hours because the surface is gradually etched by stray shot till it becomes frosted like ground glass.

The next process is

Testing the Frame.

The firms mentioned each employ their own method. In the Rudge-Whitworth factory a "jig" of the shape shown in Fig. 5 is used. It has a long slit in the upper surface. The frame to be tested is held at the bracket by two steel points round which it can be turned so as to pass through the slit. On the top of the jig is a sliding gauge marked along the centre; and also a flat steel gauge hinging at one end from a point near the bracket pivot. The workman raises the latter through the chain stays, and if it does not pass perfectly centrally he heats the stays with a blow-flame and bends them true. Next he inserts a pointed steel bar (A) into the saddle lug, and another with a point at each end (B and C) through the head tube. The frame is revolved through the jig and, if necessary, heated and bent a little this way or that until every one of the three points is exactly in line with the mark on the gauge. In this manner perfect truth is obtained.

The New Hudson people do the testing on a perfectly flat steel table, measuring it with various instruments. This testing is a very important operation, for if the frame has the least twist the chain will not run true, the wheels will not track, and the machine will lack "life" (Fig. 6).

From the testing-department we pass to the

Polishing-Shop,

where a regular pyrotechnic display is given by dozens of whirring emery wheels as they scour the frame to the brightness of silver. The polish ensures that the enamel shall lie evenly all over the frame (Fig. 7).

To prevent injury to the workmen's health, the dust from the wheels is sucked by air-pumps into funnels on the machines which carry it out of the building.

The frame has now to be enamelled. First it is dipped in paraffin and placed with a number

Fig. 3.—Pinning frames together before brazing at the New Hudson works.

FIG. 4.—Operatives at the New Hudson Works cleaning brazed joints with steel dust blown from nozzles by compressed air. The curious head-dress protects their eyes and lungs.

of its fellows in a large oven, heated to a high temperature, which "sweats" all the grease out of the pores of the machine. From this time onwards the workman must not touch a frame with the hands until enamelling is complete, as enamel will not stick to a surface on which there is the least suspicion of grease.

The actual

ENAMELLING

is performed by dipping the frame bodily into large tanks of shining black enamel. The surplus having drained off, the frame is placed in an oven heated to about 350 degrees Fahrenheit and allowed to remain there three hours or so for the enamel to harden. I stepped into one of these ovens just to try the heat. Whew! the mere atmospheric temperature—it was one of the hottest days of the "heat wave" in September—outside seemed quite chilly when I emerged after a few seconds. Yet men have to go and sit in there and wipe off the enamel, which runs to the lowest points of the parts.

This process is repeated four times, the surface being flattened down with pumice-stone after every stoving but the last.

Some frames have then to be

LINED

in colours or gold. It is a fascinating sight to watch the very expert workers drawing the colour-lines *free-hand* with almost mathematical precision

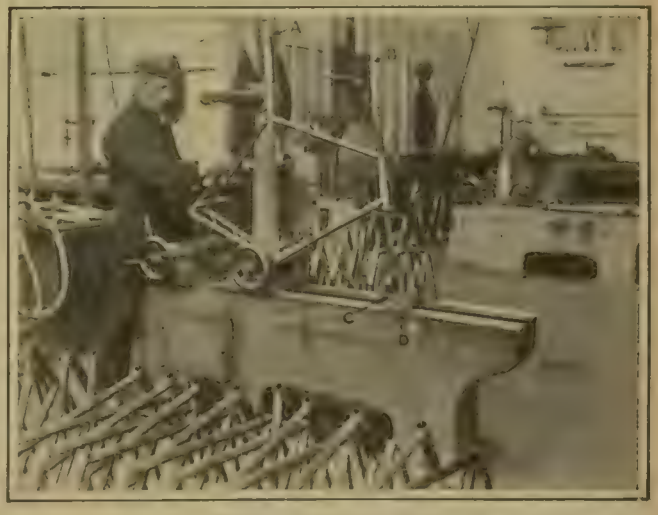


FIG. 5.—Testing the truth of a frame at the Rudge-Whitworth works. Pointed steel bars, A, B, and C, are inserted into the saddle lug and head tube, and the frame is trued until all three points are exactly in line with a central mark on the gauge D, when the frame is revolved about the bottom bracket.

FIG. 6.—Frame-testing at the New Hudson Works

and straightness. Even Euclid could scarcely criticise their work. They dip their long camel-hair "points" into the colour and, resting the thumb on the tube as a guide, draw a line much more quickly than it takes to write about it.

The gold-lining is a more tedious process. One method is to paint the surface over with isinglass; to stick pure gold-leaf on it; to line the gold with black enamel to wash off all the gold not covered by the enamel; and,

Fig. 7.—Polishing the frame on an emery wheel.

finally, to dissolve away the enamel, leaving the gold lines beneath. It is a comparatively slow business, and the manufacturer, reasonably enough, makes gold-lining a fairly heavy "extra."

What has been said of the frame applies to the forks. They are brazed, cleaned, enamelled, and lined in a precisely similar manner.

We now turn to the

Wheel-building.

The Rudge-Whitworth people make their own rims. I saw the rolling-mill, which absorbs a long ribbon of steel, cuts it to correct length, and draws it between fifteen sets of rolls, gradually fashioning rim after rim true to section and perfectly circular. The ends are joined by a plate riveted over them.

The rim then has the spoke-holes punched by a mathematically correct jig—thirty-two for the front, forty for the back of an "R.-W."

The *spokes* are made from steel wire. An operative cuts each to standard length in a special machine. Elsewhere they have threads fashioned on their nipple ends by being rolled between a pair of serrated jaws. The rate at which the R.-W. machines treat the spokes is marvellous; and yet it is a fact that the threads so squeezed on the wire are more perfect than if they had been made by screwing the spokes through a die.

The *hubs*, *spindles*, and *cones* are turned out of solid steel bars by automatic machinery. In the New Hudson works you may see a long row of these wonderful contrivances fashioning cups for the bottom bracket. Each grips a bar. As the bar revolves a series of operations are performed on the outer end of it by a number of tools presented to it in succession. As each finishes its particular job it is automatically withdrawn and the next steps into its place. One bores out the cup; another cuts a screw-thread on the circumference; a third separates the cup from the bar, and drops it by the machine. There is a snick! and the bar has advanced towards the cutter just the distance required for the next cup; and so on hour after hour. Every part is perfectly true to standard size; the automaton can't make a mistake. Similarly with the spindles and hubs.

These parts are then hardened in special furnaces, polished, plated, and polished again, and then are ready for incorporation into the cycle.

The spokes and hub (the last bored in a jig) are first laced into the rim, and then the half-built wheel is placed on a stand and the spokes are finally tensioned and the wheel trued at the same time. This is done wonderfully quickly.

Next on go the covers and inner-tubes. I asked how long it took a skilled workman to get them in position, and was told "Two minutes by the watch." This sounds very rapid work. One would like to have one of the men near at hand in case of a puncture.

The free-wheel having been added, the wheel is complete.

The Handle-bars

merit a few words. The rough article as it comes from the brazing-department is T-shaped,

Fig. 8.—Boring spoke holes in rims (New Hudson).

with a top very long in proportion to the stem. This is filled with sand to prevent collapse of the tube during bending, heated at certain points, and bent to shape over an iron "form." I saw some smiths at work on "dropped" handle-bars. Their dexterity quite astonished me.

Now for the

Cranks.

A decade ago crank-making was a slow business, each article being shaped by hand. Their manufacture is now accomplished very speedily. The New Hudson people go about it as follows: First, you have the steel forgings, the cranks in the rough. These are bored for the axle, cotter, and crank-pins, and placed in a frame or gallery in clusters of eight upwards. Each cluster is passed under a revolving steel cutter shaped to the outline of a crank. This whisks off all the spare metal, leaving the exact outline required. The gallery is then reversed and the other side of the cranks are treated likewise. The sides being finished, the face and back are planed true in other machines. Thanks to the cutters, twenty cranks are now finished in about one-twentieth of the time formerly required to finish a single crank by hand.

Chain Wheels

are stamped out of steel sheets by very powerful presses. A number of these stampings are then threaded together on a spindle and placed in a machine somewhat similar to that already described, and cutters pass over the periphery of each, biting out the teeth of all the stampings simultaneously. The machinery is so perfect that the modern chain-wheel is wonderfully true; and this, it need hardly be said, greatly conduces to comfortable pedalling, since the tension of the chain remains constant if the teeth of the wheels over which it passes are all of precisely the same size.

For lack of space I am obliged to omit reference to many other interesting processes, and must now introduce my readers to the department in the Rudge-Whitworth factory where the various parts are finally brought together.

Down the centre of the great floor, 400 ft. long by 60 wide, are a number of wired-in enclosures, with windows like those of a booking-office, but on a larger scale. Inside each are multitudinous pigeon-holes and boxes full of cranks, handle-bars with brakes attached, screws, cups, cranks, &c. The men in charge are given lists of specifications for machines of all sizes. The parts of a machine are placed in a box and handed out through a pigeon-hole to an assembler, who takes them to one of the branches round the walls and rapidly puts them together.

As soon as his machine is complete it goes to

The Examiners,

through whose hands it must pass for close scrutiny of all details. They run their hands over all the tubes, feeling for inequalities in the surface; spin the wheels; test the bearings and free-wheel; try the brakes; and generally do their best to discover any failing in the machine, no matter what grade it may be.

Fig. 9.—Machining cranks. A finished "gallery" of cranks is seen near the operative's right hand. Another gallery is passing under the milling cutter.

If a shortcoming is found, particulars are written on a large label; this is tied on, and the machine is sent back to the assembler, who has to put things right. If, however, the machine passes the scrutiny successfully, a number is stamped on the head with a steel die, and this is entered with full particulars of the machine in a large ledger. So that in twenty years' time the makers could, if necessary, turn up the history of any mount.

I have postponed to the end of my article an account of

The Electro-plating Process

to which the hubs, rims, spokes, handle-bars, &c., are submitted. In a large works this is effected economically by means of special devices. Among the things which I saw at the Rudge-Whitworth factory was a very fine electro-plating outfit. In one tank a number of rims mounted on a frame were being slowly revolved in a solution of nickel. One terminal of the electric circuit was connected to large

FIG. 10.—An electro-plating vat at the New Hudson Works. A long chain of hooks is constantly circulating above the tank. The articles to be plated are hung from the hooks, so that they are drawn through the plating solution.

plates of nickel,—the other to the pivot on which the frame revolved. The current flowing from the plates to the rims deposited the nickel in the electrolyte (*i.e.*, the solution) on the rims. In another tank bunches of small fittings were being plated. But in this case, instead of the articles being moved through the solution, the solution was circulated by pumps among the fittings. It is found that the electrical deposition of metal is hastened by such movement.

The plating completed, the object is polished by revolving discs of calico.

The reader may, perhaps, wonder why some machines cost so much more than others. The answer has been given in a previous article; but I will recapitulate it. A first-class mount must have the lugs turned to the minimum thickness consistent with safety, to save weight. This means that only the most perfect forgings are available, as the turning down reveals defects, and there are a lot of "wasters." Then there is the lining in gold or colours; the steering-lock; better saddle; extra light mudguards; better tyres; better pedals; better rims; better plating; better brakes; and better general finish.

I must not close this article without tendering my thanks to Mr. W. A. Blatch, the courteous Secretary of the Rudge-Whitworth Co., and to Mr. W. Goddard of the New Hudson Cycle Co. for the kind help they have given me towards writing and illustrating this all-too-short account of the fine enterprises which they represent.

THE DIGGER'S DREAM.

Somewhere out beyond the mallee,
  Somewhere by an unknown peak,
Somewhere in a hidden valley,
  Somewhere in an unnamed creek,
Somewhere—where the wattle sprinkles
  Golden blossoms on the stream,
Somewhere—where the bell-bird tinkles,
  Lies the land of which we dream.

Year by year that peak is sighted,
  Year by year that valley spied;
But no foot has ever lighted
  On that Eldorado's side.
Darkling clouds of disenchantment
  Shroud that valley and that hill;
Gloomy mists of disappointment
  Veil the Eldorado still.

Some day, out beyond the mallee,
  Some day, by that unknown peak,
Some day, in that hidden valley,
  We shall find that unnamed creek.
Some day, bursting through the shadow
  Of those veiling mists and cold,
We shall light on Eldorado,
  Eldorado! land of gold!

A. C. YORKE.

In the Crocodile Pit.

By DAVID KER.

Illustrated by John de Walton.

"IGHT of the world and shelter of mankind! your humblest servant, Shumsheer-i-Hind, dares to lay his homage at your august feet and to announce to your sublime ears that he has taken that son of Shaitaun (Satan), Mir Ali the robber."

"Sword of India" seemed a very fit name for the stalwart soldier who, as captain of the royal body-guard, had just knelt at the feet of his master, the Rajah of Magherpoor (Crocodile Town), to report the capture of the most famous robber-chief in the whole district.

The Rajah was sitting under a canopy of coloured silk in his palace garden—a picturesque maze of dark, glossy foliage, gorgeous tropical flowers, gilded arbours, and tiny fountains splashing into basins of polished marble—above which rose the great tower of the palace, a mighty mass of pink stone (very like a monster "shape" of strawberry ice-cream), with flags of every colour fluttering from its quaintly carved turrets and cornices, and the famous "peacock banner" of the Rajah waving jauntily over all.

"I beg to offer your Highness my hearty congratulations," said to the Rajah, in fluent Hindustani, the man seated beside him—a sturdy, sun-burned, keen-eyed man in the uniform of a British major of foot. "I am glad the fellow is caught at last, for I understand he has been the pest of the whole country."

"It is a true word," said the Rajah grimly, "but he shall work evil no more. Shumsheer-i-Hind, thou hast done well, and great shall be thy reward. Where is this son of mischief whom thou hast taken?"

"Close at hand, under a strong guard," replied the soldier. "What is the pleasure of his sublime highness concerning him?"

"Let him be brought hither," said the prince; "we would look upon him ere he die."

The captain of the guard made a low salaam, and withdrew.

Meanwhile the great news had flown through the crowd that filled the garden (for the Rajah, one of the most civilised of the native princes, was wont to throw open his grounds daily to the people of his capital), and the excitement was overwhelming.

As a rule, the chief attraction to the town folk was the crocodile tank in the midst of the garden, where the Rajah kept his pet monsters. A gruesome spectacle it was, that foul pit of slimy, greenish-brown water, alive and moving with the horny snouts and scaly, mud-plastered bodies of those horrid reptiles; and the sight of it amid these graceful palms and brilliant flowers might well have made Nathaniel Hawthorne, in one of his weird fancies, compare it to a wicked secret hidden in the heart of some man of fair outward seeming and high reputation. But it was an unfailing attraction for the native loungers, and on every fine evening the stone-paved terrace around it was crowded to overflowing.

But the moment it got abroad that the famous bandit-chief had been captured, and was about to be brought up to that very spot, everything else was at once forgotten. The crocodile tank was deserted in a trice, and a wall of eager faces and jostling shoulders grew up along either side of the broad, smooth walk by which he was to come.

But when he did come, the general feeling was one of deep disappointment. Instead of the towering, brawny giant whom one and all had expected to see in the person of this dreaded bandit, whose wild adventures and hairbreadth escapes matched those of "Sivajee the Mahratta" himself, what they saw was a small, spare, almost meagre man, no taller than themselves!

But the major's soldier-eye gave him a very different impression of the prisoner. The bold, firm face—the sinewy limbs, with a tiger-like elasticity in their every movement—the fearless bearing—the quick, watchful eye—told their own story to *him;* nor did he fail to notice the fearful scars that seamed in all directions the man's gaunt chest and arms, which his torn and blood-stained clothing left all but bare.

The Rajah himself (a noted warrior in his younger days) was not slow to mark these tokens of prowess, and muttered with stern approval:

"By the tomb of the Prophet, this is a *man*!"

"Thou art caught at last, then, Ali Jemmadar!" added he, after eyeing his prisoner in silence for a moment. "The chatty goes oft to the well, but it is always broken in the end!"

"It was the will of Allah that I should be taken," said Ali composedly; "who can resist Him?"

"Ha! art thou a Moslem, then?" cried the Rajah, himself a zealous Mohammedan, as were most of his subjects.

"I am," said the bandit. "There is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet."

"Thou art pat with thy confession of faith, friend," said the prince, smiling sternly; "but, Moslem or no, thou hast been a robber and a slayer of men, and we free not again a tiger that we have once snared."

"Kill me if thou wilt," replied the other, calmly. "If it be my fate to die, I am ready; no man can avert his destiny."

"True are thy words, Mir Ali; but how if it be thy fate to be cast into yon tank of crocodiles?"

A visible shudder ran through the listening crowd.

"Surely your Highness would never do such a thing?" said Major Steel in English, with a look of deep disgust on his bold, manly face.

"Not I," replied the Rajah in the same tongue; "I only want to see if I can frighten him."

But it seemed as if he had got hold of the wrong man for that purpose; for, so far from being scared, the doomed captive laughed aloud.

"Cast me in, then—it shall profit thee little. The Magher-log (crocodile people) are my friends and brothers, and they will do me no harm!"

Ere the amazed Rajah could reply, there came a startling interruption.

A gust of wind whisked off the Rajah's embroidered cap (a small round skull-cap set with precious stones) and whirled it away right into the centre of the crocodile tank!

"In an unlucky hour was I born!" cried the prince despairingly; "the clasp of yon cap held a sacred stone from the tomb of the Prophet himself, given me by a holy man whom I met in Mecca when I went thither on pilgrimage; and he told me that on *it* depended all my good fortune. I would not have lost it for the best diamond in my palace! If any man can bring it back to me, he shall take from my treasury as much as he can lift in both his hands."

But even this dazzling offer could not tempt those who heard it to face seemingly certain death, and it was received by the throng in gloomy silence.

Then, amid the dead hush that followed, came forth, clear and unfaltering as ever, the voice of Mir Ali the robber:

"Shall *I* bring it back to thee, Rajah? and wilt thou give me my life if I do?"

"Thou hast said," cried the Rajah, trembling with eagerness, "that the crocodiles will not harm thee. If thou hast spoken truly, and canst bring me back that which I have lost, thou shalt go free!"

"Dost thou swear it on the Koran?"

"On the Koran I swear it, and on the tomb of the Prophet."

"It is good," said the bandit, as calmly as ever.

A murmur of excitement buzzed around the listening throng. Here was a new spectacle, tenfold more startling than the first; and instantly all who could get near surged up like a wave on the paved terrace around the fatal tank, leaving just room for Mir Ali to pass.

The robber threw off what little clothing he had, retaining only his cummerbund (loin-cloth), thus leaving free for action every limb of his gaunt, sinewy frame, which glistened with a curious sheen, like the surface of a bronze statue when touched by the sunshine. Then, with a firm step, he went straight to the tank!

The Rajah watched him with parted lips and straining eyes, and even the cool major bent forward as eagerly as a boy. They could hardly believe, even now, that this reckless man would actually run such a deadly risk, and yet it certainly seemed as if he meant it.

MIR ALI HAD JUST SEIZED THE PRECIOUS CAP WHEN THE MONSTERS WERE UPON HIM!

The cap, thanks to its light material and the slimy heaviness of the water, was still floating unharmed on the thick, oily surface, and all around it lay basking in the sun, on the mud-banks that peered up through the water every here and there, the hideous monsters—a dozen at least, for the tank was a very large one. A more loathsome and horrible sight could not be imagined, and the mere thought of a man going down into such a place—! But all this seemed to have no effect whatever on the iron-nerved bandit, who, climbing over the railing that guarded the brink, hung by his hands for a moment from the edge of the parapet, and then dropped with a loud splash into the fearful pool below!

The Rajah, too excited to think of his dignity, stood on tiptoe to watch, and craned his neck forward like a child at a peep-show; and the major, springing down from the platform, flew to give orders for the lowering of a rope into the tank, by which the man might climb out if he succeeded—a point which, necessary as it was, had been quite forgotten in the general excitement.

Till then, the crocodiles had seemed quite unconscious of what was going on, being used, no doubt, to a daily crowd and bustle around their dwelling-place, but the splash of Mir Ali's plunge into the water, and the lap-lap of the ripples against their exposed sides, fairly roused them at last. The closed eyes opened, the huge tails flapped excitedly, the scaly backs quivered as the monsters drew themselves together for a dash at this unlooked-for prey.

Meanwhile Mir Ali, wading steadily through the shallow water (for the interposed mud-banks gave him no chance to swim), had just seized the precious cap, when, with a swirl and a rush that lashed the water into foam, the monsters were upon him!

A tremor ran through the gazing throng, and even the hardy major turned away his face; but he looked round again as a cry of amazement broke from the crowd:

"See, brothers, see! they will not touch him; he must be a magician!"

In fact, the first crocodile that reached him, just as its terrible jaws were within a few inches of his bare chest, turned aside and drew hastily back, and so, too, did the next, and the next, and the next, while Mir Ali, standing unharmed amid the ring of gaping jaws and narrow, cruel eyes, looked round with a smile of scornful triumph on his lean wolfish face.

"Said I not so?" cried a voice from the crowd; "it is the power of Eblis (the Evil One) that aids him. How else could such a little starveling jackal do such deeds as he hath done, unless he were helped by demons?"

The Rajah, who was quite of the same opinion, looked visibly scared, and even the cool Englishman was taken aback, for, much as he had seen and heard of the strange power possessed by certain men in the East over beasts and reptiles, he had never yet seen anything like this.

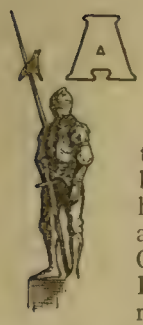
Back came Mir Ali—the crocodiles again drawing aside as he passed—and he was already close to the rope when a huge, old, drowsy brute in the far corner (whose age-dulled senses had been hardly moved by all this stir) at last perceived what was going on, and came rushing across the pool to seize the man, who had got barely halfway up the rope when the huge snout shot up from the water with a savage snap at his dangling limbs!

The crowd's quick gasp of horror sounded like a hiss in that dead silence; but their alarm was needless. Barely three inches below the soles of his bare feet, the terrible jaws clashed together with the snap of a steel-trap, but they clashed in vain, and the next moment Ali was safe on the terrace.

His pardon being thus secured, Major Steel begged him of the Rajah as a recruit, and the frightened prince, eager to get rid of the dreaded "magician," at once agreed. But not till they were fairly clear of the city did Mir Ali tell his new leader that the supposed magic lay simply in his being wont to anoint himself daily (as a needful precaution in this crocodile-haunted region) with the sap of a tree, as offensive to crocodiles as assafœtida or burnt feathers to ourselves.

A Soldier's Life. By P. J. Thorpe.

II. TOMMY IN EXCELSIS.



AT no time in a soldier's career is he more elated than when, for the first time, his right arm is decorated with the lance-corporal's stripe. On the day that he learns that his name has been submitted for promotion, he is on tenter-hooks until the appearance of the Regimental Order announcing his elevation. It does not take him long to rush across to the tailor's shop, where the chevron is soon sewn on, and as he dons his coat and struts across the square, there is not a prouder man in the whole battalion.

Re-entering the barrack-room he is greeted with the hand-shakes and congratulations of his comrades, and, in accordance with the usual custom, he "wets his stripe" by standing treat all round. He is very full of himself all that day, and every now and then you will notice him casting furtive glances at the newly gained decoration on his right sleeve.

Unless he is absolutely prevented by duty, he is early at work in the afternoon preparing for his "walk out," for it is necessary that he should apprise the whole town, as well as his best girl, of his rise in the world, and as he steps lightly and buoyantly down the street he feels sure that he is the cynosure of neighbouring eyes. As years roll by, other and much more valuable promotion comes to him, but never again does he experience such a feeling of exaltation as when he received his first step of promotion and became a "lance-jack."

The soldier is also exceedingly proud of his first good conduct badge, which is granted to him after two years of continuous good conduct. That badge in a way ennobles him—it is a special mark of distinction—it is a public announcement of the man's steadiness and trustworthiness, and knowing that, he rises in his own estimation, and realises that he is now on a different plane of existence—it makes him more circumspect in his behaviour, and should an unfortunate slip on his part bring about its loss, he feels it acutely, and is not the same man again until this mark of grace is restored to him at the end of twelve months' uninterrupted good conduct, dating from the day of his lapse.

Even to those who are denied the delights of promotion or of exhibiting their good conduct rewards, there is open a decoration in the shape of a good shooting badge, and

IT IS NECESSARY THAT HE SHOULD APPRISE THE WHOLE TOWN, AS WELL AS HIS BEST GIRL, OF HIS RISE IN THE WORLD.

it is a moot point whether the soldier is not more proud of this than of even his insignia of good conduct. Certain it is that no man is filled with a feeling of greater self-esteem than the Tommy when he is first decorated with his musketry prize, after a sturdy contest on the rifle range.

But it is not promotion alone that raises the soldier to the seventh heaven of delight—if it is ever the lot of one of my readers to be present in a barracks on the day that the regiment is warned for active service, he will witness a scene of wild delight and exuberant spirits of which one can draw but a poor pen-picture.

The moment the news is known in the

barrack-room there arises a perfect babel of loud hurrahs, joyous laughter, and mirthful chat, which would lead a stranger to suppose that a wondrous piece of glad tidings had come to hand, or that the men were on the eve of some great festival. The soldiers themselves tread on air, there is a great uplifting of spirits, differences are sunk, friendships renewed, and the soldier for the time being is the happiest mortal on earth, and feels that he would not exchange places with a millionaire.

This exaltation of spirit accompanies him in his wanderings, in his daily round of

THERE IS STILL ANOTHER TRIUMPH IN STORE FOR HIM—THE DAY HIS OFFICER PINS ON HIS BREAST HIS WAR MEDAL.

camp life, in his marching through the enemy's country, and in the heat of battle—and if the hardships and discomforts of a protracted campaign do now and then damp his ardour a little—the lust of battle revivifies it, and his thoughts of those at home and the reception he will meet with from them on his return, inspire him to do his best; a conscious pride comes swelling into his throat, and again he revels in a feeling of manly superiority.

But see him when he returns home, travel-stained and war-worn, and is met at the station by acclaiming crowds. Proudly he casts his eyes round the cheering multitudes, and as the band breaks into a stirring march he steps along with springy tread, head erect and the light of victory irradiating his whole face—he feels then that it is good to be a soldier.

There is still another triumph in store for him—the day his officer pins on his breast his war medal—the goal of his ambition, the reward of all his trials, his hardships, and his fighting—the badge of the hero. That day makes him a man amongst men, a king among his fellow creatures.

One more picture to make you realise Tommy in Excelsis. After a few days' delay to get the necessary documents in readiness, furloughs are granted to the men, and there is not a happier man in the land than Tommy as he shakes hands all round with his comrades in the barrack-room, and with a well-filled purse, a good kit, and his furlough in his pocket, strides out of the barrack gate and makes for the railway station.

Reaching there he finds other of his corps waiting to leave. Mutual congratulations are passed, an adjournment is made to the refreshment bar for a drink, seats are taken in the carriages, kit-bags deposited on the rack overhead, cigarettes lit, and as the train moves out of the station the jubilant soldiers set up a ringing cheer which reverberates from platform to platform, and seems to send its echoes around long after the train has disappeared. At the end of his journey a crowd of relatives and friends are waiting to welcome the war-scarred hero, and he receives an ovation in keeping with all that he longed for and looked forward to in the days when he was risking life, day by day and hour by hour, in defence of his king and country and of the loved ones at home.

THE CAPTAIN CAMERA CORNER

Photo. C. Winter Wood, Paignton.

DEVELOPING FILMS: WINTER WORK.

THOUGH development is, under certain conditions, one of the most pleasant and interesting of photographic processes, the treatment of a large number of exposed plates or films may pall. When one returns from a holiday with a heavy "bag," there is a temptation to get the developing done with in large doses. But I fancy that it is a mistake to obey this prompting. Personally, I very seldom handle more than a dozen films on end, lest weariness of the coloured light should lead to scamping the work a bit.

For films I prefer Rodinal, for plates Pyro Soda. The former developer has merely to be mixed with from fifteen to forty parts of water, according to the exposure of the plate. In case of over-exposure use a strong developer with three to five drops of a 10 per cent. solution of bromide of potassium to the ounce of developer; for under-exposures a weak developer and no bromide. Flat films, especially Premo Film Pack and Kodoid films, should be developed face downwards, as the undulations of the surface tend to cause streaky development if they are placed film up. I strongly recommend the use of the simple dish-rocker described in my last article, with a ten-pound weight on the pendulum. The presence of developer in the dish stifles the vibrations of the rocker very quickly unless a heavy "bob" be attached. One advantage of Rodinal is that the negative need not be kept moving. At the same time it is advisable to rock the dish, so that the film may not press on the bottom and develop unequally.

Users of Rodinal will do well to remember that the density of the negative is greatly reduced by the fixing-bath. Therefore carry development much further than would be right for Pyro or Hydrokinone — until the film appears black through the celluloid, when viewed from behind.

Washing Film Negatives.

For this important process the "Jaynay" floating clip is a great help. It grips the negative by one edge and allows it to dangle in the washing-vessel; and when washing is complete the two little hooks on the top enable you to suspend it from a line for the film to dry. These clips cost twopence each.

It should be pointed out that both films and plates are washed much more thoroughly in stagnant water if held well above the bottom of the vessel. The hypo, as it dissolves out of the film, falls to the bottom. Amateurs who cannot command a running water-supply will do well to remember this. Use a deep vessel, and if plates are to be washed suspend the rack from a string so that there is at least a clear inch between it and the bottom of the vessel. Don't lift the rack out of the water, but syphon off the water slowly, so that no currents may be formed to disturb the hypo. Then fill up again. Three or four changes made in this manner will ensure good washing. In the case of films or prints, lift them very gently from the water. Syphoning won't do in this case, as the clips sink with the water

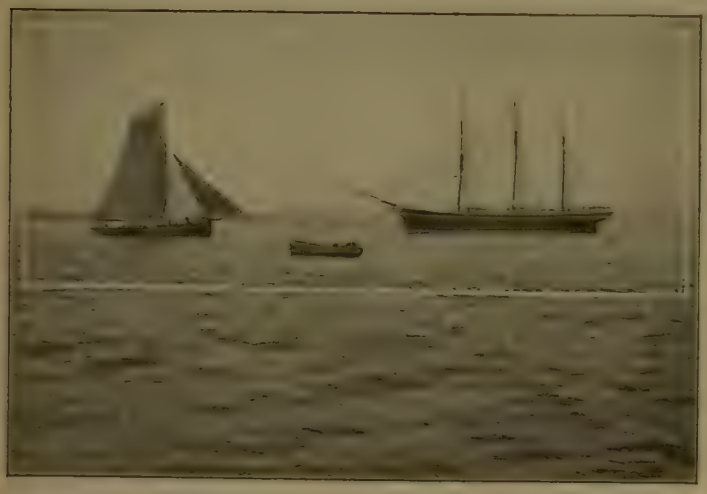


FIG. 1.—THERE IS HERE TOO MUCH FOREGROUND, AND THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTS ARE TOO HIGH. BY TRIMMING TO THE LINES A MUCH MORE ARTISTIC EFFECT IS OBTAINED, AS WILL BE APPARENT IF THE EDGES ARE COVERED UP.

Winter Work.

The hand-camera is at a considerable discount during the darker months of the year. But the stand-camera should not—at least, not in the country—be retired to winter quarters. The keen photographer can find plenty of work to do all the year round. One of the charges to be brought against the prevalence of hand-cameras is that it tends to make people forget this. When the leaves are off the trees one is able to work in many places where the view is quite obstructed in the summer.

But apart from negative making you may keep yourself busy. Begin by overhauling your dark-room, and if it is damp in the winter see that all chemicals are in air-tight receptacles. Remove from it boxes of plates and packets of printing-paper. Then

Sort out your Negatives

and arrange them in an orderly manner, so that any one can be found easily; and look over the many prints that you have made during the summer. Don't hesitate to destroy all second-rate prints. They are really only lumber which mar the general effect of the collection. Replace them by more perfect specimens.

While on the subject of prints I will say something about

Trimming and Mounting.

To the beginner trimming often means nothing more than cutting off the white edges which the rebate of the printing-frame has prevented from darkening. This is the operation in a very crude form. Many prints, especially those of landscapes and outdoor subjects generally, may be made or marred by the extent to which the trimming-knife is used. Errors in the composition may be corrected to a certain extent. For instance, a full print from the negative may have the sky-line just half way up the plate—a very bad position. By cutting away part from the top or bottom either foreground or sky is accentuated, and the effect becomes much more satisfactory. Whether sky or foreground should be sacrificed depends upon the subject. One would not cut away part of a prettily clouded sky to spare an uninteresting foreground, nor would one keep all of a flat sky and slice away part of the foreground. It is very difficult to lay down a series of exact rules, since in trimming, as in composing the picture, a cultivated taste alone is the sure guide. But I consider that, as a rule, beginners don't use the pruning-knife enough. A useful tip is to provide yourself with a number of masks having apertures of different sizes, and to move the print about behind these till a satisfactory effect is obtained. Then mark

FIG. 2.—THE DARK EDGES MAKE THE PRINT TOO HEAVY. CUT THESE OFF AS SHOWN, AND THE PICTURE IS MUCH IMPROVED.

the print through the mask and trim accordingly.

For the actual cutting-off of the waste, a well-sharpened pen-knife is quite good enough. Touch it up on a hone every now and then. The print should be placed on some unyielding material such as plate glass—an old looking-glass is just the thing—or clean zinc plate. This will ensure a perfect cut. People who have a lot of prints to handle will find a "Klito" Lever Blade Trimmer a good time-saver, where straight lines only are in question. For oval pictures a set of zinc cutting shapes (price about 3*s.* for a set of six and a swivel trimmer) is needed. You should also have a rectangular plate-glass shape somewhat larger than the plates used in your camera; thus, a five-by-four for ¼ plates. A very handy form has parallel lines ruled on the lower surface in both directions. These help you to keep the edges of the print parallel.

FIG. 3.—OUT OF A SLAB AND UNINTERESTING PRINT A PRETTY LITTLE PIECE MAY OFTEN BE CHOSEN. THE PART INSIDE THE LINES LOOKS WELL BY ITSELF, BUT IS SWAMPED IF THE REST IS LEFT IN.

Mounting.

The simplest form of mount is the "slip-in." It is handy for exhibiting prints in, but is not very artistic, as the print cannot be trimmed beyond certain dimensions. The plate-sunk mount is more effective, though it too has its drawbacks. One is practically obliged to arrange the print in the exact centre of the mount, and a print looks better when placed rather above the centre, especially if anything in the nature of a title has to be written underneath.

For showing off prints to advantage there is much to be said in favour of the stout art paper mounts now so popular. Special papers of twenty or so different colours can be bought from the dealers for about sixpence a dozen pieces twelve by ten inches. Among the advantages of this method are the convenience of being able to select a tint suited to the printing-paper; that prints so mounted don't buckle; that they are easily stored in a small space; and that they can be rearranged and added to indefinitely. A white- or light-coloured edging round the print is sometimes very effective, but should not be adhered to as a fixed practice. The value of a collection is enhanced by artistic variety. Those photographers who are fortunate enough to be skilful with brush or pen have unlimited scope for originality in tasteful designs on the mount itself.

I can recommend the "Phosys" file for prints. It works on the principle of the card-index file used in libraries, offices, &c. Each print is mounted separately on an art paper or card mount. The mounts are stacked perpendicularly in an oak tray, being held in position by a removable rod which passes through holes near their bottom edges. Enough room is left for the mounts to be toppled forward to show any one. The better-class files are provided with dust-proof lids. For drawing-room purposes these are preferable to the album, as fresh pictures can be substituted from time to time.

A Duplicate Album.

It is advisable to keep a reserve of prints

FIG. 4.—"AT THE FOURTH HURDLE." A VERY LEVEL LOT. TIME, $\frac{1}{35}$ SECOND.

from one's most interesting negatives. Store them, untrimmed, in a scrap-album with stout cartridge-paper leaves, inserting each corner through a slit in the page. Half a dozen prints (of the same subject, of course) can be placed one on the top of the other. This will ensure your having duplicates ready to hand. Many photos. which have a purely personal interest are best hoarded in this manner.

There are plenty of good mountants on the market. Higgins' is now very popular. In a previous article I quoted from a correspondent's letter on the subject of applying the mountant to the prints when the "wet" process is used. The prints are soaked and piled backs upwards, one on the top of the other, and squeezed until all superfluous moisture is removed and they stick to one another. The uppermost is then brushed over with the adhesive and mounted, then the next, and so on. When "dry" mounting is preferred—and it is advisable in the case of a number of differently sized prints—smear the mountant on with the fingers, working from the centre outwards. The mount is marked ready, so that there may be no delay about adjusting the print. Press the print on to the mount with a soft rag, wiping outwards. If it puckers badly, lift it by one edge and strip it almost off, then gradually replace it. A bit of slackness does not necessarily mean a failure, as the print contracts as it dries. In fact, a certain amount of slackness tends to prevent buckling of the mount.

When mounted, the print should be covered with a piece of chemically pure blotting-paper—such as is sold for the purpose—and put under pressure till dry. After all, mounting is a simple enough business, even if a rather messy one; and troubles will be avoided if you take care that the adhesive is laid on evenly, without lumps, and that none of it gets on the face of the prints. Don't worry if the edges don't stick well while the print is wet; they will adhere tightly enough as it dries under pressure.

A New P.O.P.

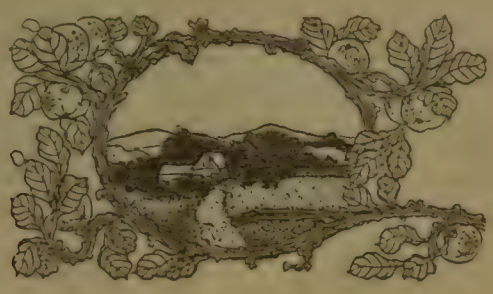
is that introduced by the Kodak Co., under the name of "Velvet Solio." Its surface is a compromise between those of the well-known matte and glossy papers, giving all the detail of a glossy surface and the artistic softness of the matte. This is a very useful all-round paper, toned in the ordinary way. The Company's Dekko and Bromide papers are also included in the "Velvet" Series.

Another useful P.O.P. is "Solio No. 2," the notable feature of which is that the film is not liable to strip from the paper when immersed in baths of different temperatures. This properly makes it especially suitable for handling in warm weather.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. D. Appleby.—(1) A *symmetrical* lens has two elements, *i.e.*, a lens on each side of the stop, of the same focus. A *rectilinear* lens is one which is so corrected as to reproduce straight lines as straight lines and not curved. If you photographed a square object with an uncorrected lens the sides would appear to bulge or curve inwards according to the side of the stop on which the lens was. So that if you remove the front element of a rectilinear lens you get "barrel" distortion; if the back, "pincushion" distortion. *Anastigmatic* lenses give good definition to the edge of the plate with full working aperture. Astigmatism implies the inability of a lens to focus in one plane rays which pass through it obliquely; and sometimes results from the endeavour of the optician to secure a flat field. (2) You must either have long extension or a lens of short focus. To copy a thing full size the camera must extend to twice the focal length of the lens. (3) You need a rising and swinging front for lofty buildings. It is a decided advantage to have a swing back as well. (4) Tudor Cameras are excellent for all-round purposes, including copying. (5) Much cheaper to make up your own solutions.

D. H. Noble.—Your letter is rather confusing. You say that the diaphragm acted in just the same manner as an Iris, but was *fixed* at about f/3. This seems to be a contradiction in terms. I can hardly imagine that you have the figure right, as f/3 would mean an aperture of about two inches from a quarter-plate. So I can't give you an answer.



A NIGHT "ALOFT."

By B. WYAND.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDGAR A. HOLLOWAY.

I.

TOM WILSON threw down his drawing-pen with a sigh of satisfaction as the striking of the church clock filtered in through the half-open window.

"Thank goodness there's another day over," he said, hastily packing away his case of instruments. "There," as he threw the black glazed cover over the drawing on which he had been working the whole day, "good-bye to that till to-morrow. Are you going to stop late again, Benson?"

His companion looked up from his work with a laugh.

"Why not?" he asked. "We're not bound to knock off work at any definite time, so far as I am aware, and—"

"Oh, well, stay if you like," interrupted the other, a shade of irritation in his tones. "I'm off, anyway. By-the-by," he was standing framed in the open doorway now, "have those fellows started on the repairs to Christ Church yet? They told the governor they were going to ladder-up to-day."

"Yes, they were at work first thing this morning, and were to finish the laddering by dinner-time. But why do you want to know? Surely—"

"Of course not!" said Tom hastily.

And with a bang of the door, he was off down the narrow staircase and out into the street, as though wishful by a hasty retreat to avoid any awkward questioning.

It was just about six months since, fresh from school, he had entered upon his pupilage to Mr. Norman Mortimer, an architect established in the market-town of Stowborough; and it cannot be said that he had up to now distinguished himself by either application to, or talent for, his duties.

"I don't care what they say," Tom muttered to himself as he wended his way home, "I'm going to have a try at that steeple. It's a beastly shame to keep a fellow screwed down with his nose over a drawing-board all day, and then when a chance of a bit of excitement comes along to forbid him to take it."

The renovation of the spire of Christ Church had been entrusted to Mr. Mortimer, and a firm of London steeplejacks were to act as contractors for the work

"Of course, it's of no use my asking Phillips's"—the steeplejacks in question, "the

governor is sure to have given them the tip."

He revolved the matter in his mind all through the evening meal; and failing a solution of the problem he sauntered forth afterwards to have a look round.

Yes; what Benson had told him was correct. From ground to vane ran a snaky line of ladders, looking terribly frail and unsafe, each lashed in the regulation manner to two iron "dogs" or holdfasts driven into the masonry. Never before had the old church spire appeared so high. Why, to gaze up to the parapet of the tower only made him feel quite dizzy, and beyond that, tapering upwards to the blue dome, shot the tall, graceful spire, surmounted just below the vane by the steeplejacks' scaffold.

He stood for some time contemplating the task which would lie before him did he essay the giddy height; then he turned slowly away and walked meditatively homewards. He was not quite so keen on the climb now; but the awkward part of the affair was that he had already pledged himself to it in conversation with some of his friends.

"I can't draw back now," he mused. "They'd be sure to think it was funk."

The light was beginning to fail now, and with the setting of the sun a moderate wind had arisen—a wind which promised to blow itself into something approaching a gale before the night was out.

"I'll do it!" he cried to himself suddenly. "No one shall ever say that I funked. Yes, I'll go up to-night."

II.

COUNTRY towns go early to bed, and by the time the clock in the tower of Christ Church had struck eleven the streets were utterly deserted. True to its presage, the wind had increased in violence, bringing with it every now and again a swish of fine, cutting rain. It was just that kind of night when bed appears most enticing, and Tom contemplated despairingly the very comfortable little room he was leaving. Cautiously he crept downstairs, drew back the bolts of the garden door, and with heart seemingly in a very unwonted position tip-toed his way into the street which ran at the side of his mother's house. Here he breathed a little more freely, and set out at once determinedly for the Church.

Truth to tell, Tom was by no means deficient in pluck; but the adventure he was now engaged upon was so utterly novel that he more than once felt prompted to turn back and risk being twitted with "funking." To scale the churchyard railings was an easy matter, and once within the shadow of the great square tower he halted to take breath, secure from pursuit or awkward inquiry.

A long delay was, he felt, worse than useless. The steeple had to be climbed, and with a terrible feeling of real "funk" he planted his foot upon the first rung, and so one by one crawled slowly up, clinging like grim death to the side-pieces and pressing the whole weight of his body against the ladders so as to lessen in some degree their nerve-destroying pliability.

It seemed an endless climb, up and ever up; but at last he felt that he was nearly at the end of his labours, for he could see the sky above him, where hitherto had been the blackness of the masonry wall, and with difficulty repressing a glad cry he found himself—upon the parapet wall of the tower! Above him tapered the spire, half as high again as the tower, yet to be climbed; and he groaned in misery at the prospect and would have given all he possessed to have found himself once more in that little bedroom—his steeplejacking a mere dream.

He looked up with a shudder, and, in letting his eyes drop rapidly, caught sight of the sleeping world at his feet. How far down the lights seemed, twinkling there in the depths, and all was oh, so strangely silent and uncanny!

His hand was upon the ladders once more, and he was just lifting his foot off the parapet wall, when he heard a hideous jangling, whirring sound right beneath him. He dropped back on to the roof of the tower, trembling now in every limb, and he almost shrieked in his terror as a great booming burst from the louvred windows. Boom—boom—boom! Then he laughed mirthlessly as he counted the strokes. Twelve o'clock! Why, it was nearly an hour since he left home, and he was not half-way up yet.

Again he was on the yielding ladders, clinging to them with both hands and feet, sliding the former up the side-pieces in his fear of letting go his hold, and planting the latter fairly and squarely on each successive rung with the utmost caution. He did not dare cast his eyes downwards; but for all his endeavours to concentrate his attention upon the ladders, he could not help seeing how rapidly the spire began to diminish in width, and how the view of the dark, cloud-laden sky opened out more on either side at every rung he mounted.

There was more grit in him now, however, his first fear over, and he began to feel an inward triumph at the assured success of his adventure.

"They won't be able to call me funky now,"

he muttered between his clenched teeth. "I shall have the laugh of them all."

Then the thought struck him, how could he prove he had made the ascent?

"I will tie my handkerchief to the scaffold," he thought. "They will know then—"

His head encountered some hard substance, almost causing him to lose his hold. He had reached the scaffold at last; but what was wrong with the ladder above him? He stood looking at it with eyes wide open in a new-found fear. It was not going straight upwards like the others, following the slope of the spire, but was thrown outwards, so as to run round *outside* the narrow scaffolding. To climb that ladder meant hanging on with his back over the black void beneath!

The very thought appalled him. No, that he could never do—he would go down again. He had come quite high enough, and if he tied his handkerchief where he was—

He tried to let go one of his hands to draw out the handkerchief; but they clung involuntarily to the side-pieces, and he was compelled to relinquish the attempt. What should he do? To give up now would be too terrible—he was tired, too, mentally and physically exhausted, and he could never make the descent without a rest. There was no help for it—he must climb that ladder, and then he could lie awhile on the scaffold before commencing his descent.

HE CAST HIMSELF UPON THE NARROW PLANKING.

With a muttered prayer and a heartfelt repentance of his disobedience and foolhardiness, he gripped the side-pieces. Half a dozen rungs, and he had his hands upon the scaffold—half a dozen more, and he swung himself over its edge, and cast himself, panting and perspiring, upon the narrow planking.

For some few minutes he lay there, flat and prostrate, bereft of movement, lulled almost into unconsciousness by the gentle swaying of the frail structure. Then he raised his head and looked shudderingly around—downwards he did not dare look! The clouds had almost disappeared with the uprising of the moon, and here and there in the blue-black vault faint twinkling stars were beginning to creep out; but the wind was increasing in violence, and suddenly the pleasant swaying motion of the scaffold was broken in upon by a sharp short toss, almost like that of a cutter in a choppy sea.

He was standing up now, pressed close against the masonry of the small piece of the spire which was above him; but as he felt the impetuous movement of the scaffold he sank trembling upon his knees, every moment expecting to be thrown off. Below, the lights still twinkled, but very faintly, through the gathered mists, and the combined sway of scaffold and spire gave the world at his feet the resemblance of a huge, black, billowy ocean, in the depths of which he might at any moment be engulfed.

He felt that if he remained there longer his reason would go, so with trembling hands he tied his handkerchief to one of the scaffold poles,

and then—not daring to delay a moment—knelt down once more and, with hands clutching tightly that portion of the ladder which projected above the scaffold, placed one leg down on to the first rung he would use in his descent.

Even as he did so, he felt the ladder "give" and sway in a most alarming manner. What had happened? There was no need to ask. The bottom lashing had parted or become unfastened, and the ladder itself was swinging freely in the air, supported only by its top lashing. Even had he the nerve to trust himself upon it, his attempt would be vain, for he could never reach the ladder below.

The full force of this reasoning rushed in upon him in the hundredth part of a second, and with a cry of terror and despair he sank half-fainting upon the planks.

HE FELT THE LADDER "GIVE" AND SWAY IN THE MOST ALARMING MANNER.

III.

It was some considerable time before he roused himself from his stupor, and then it was only

to shrink back upon the scaffold with a shudder. The wind was rising fast, blowing itself into a steady gale; and there were occasional squalls which, while they lasted, held the scaffold as in a giant grip, to release it later with a plunge that threatened to sweep it clear of the spire out into the darkness beyond.

Once he essayed to rise to his feet, and managed indeed to get upon his knees, but the resistless swaying numbed his faculties, and he was fain to cower once more upon the planks, one arm twined around the projecting top of the ladder. To his untutored experience the spire could not much longer stand the strain placed upon it, and he pictured in vivid colours his fall through space to the graveyard lying below.

So an hour passed, or more—the booming of the clock escaped his hearing, then a lethargy began to steal over him, and he caught himself more than once nodding in response to the monotonous swaying motion, until roused by the sudden relentless grip of the storm-fiend. It was still clear overhead, and the stars looked very cruel and cold; but away in the distance, over the hills behind which the moon was already sinking, a thick scud was flecking the heavens—a scud black as the blackest night and portentous of still worse weather to come.

It was after one of these relapses that he bethought himself of some means of lashing himself in safety. At any moment he might be rolled off into eternity, and he rose now, tottering to his feet, and looked anxiously around. But his search was fruitless, and he was sinking down once more with a groan of despair, when he bethought himself of his handkerchief. How lucky it was now that he had not tied it to the ladders below! He could at least take a turn round the projecting ladder, and insecure as the ligature was it gave him some little confidence and he feared less his frequent relapses into a state of semi-somnolence.

The hours ran on, and with every vibration of the tower-clock the wind seemed to increase its violence. With the first streaks of dawn it was shrieking and howling like a thousand furies, and the swaying of the scaffold became terrifying in the extreme. But Tom was almost beyond feeling now. The terrors of the long night had proved too much for him, and he was in that condition which the family doctor, had he happened to be on the spot, would have termed semi-comatose. Below, the world for the most part was still sleeping, but already, here and there, thin little streams of smoke betokened the early housewife preparing the morning meal ere her man set out upon his day's toil.

All was light now, for the sun, although invisible behind the sullen masses of clouds, had risen far above the horizon. Work had commenced in earnest, and the sounds of hammering, the shrieks of railway whistles, the cries of children, and the booming of machinery, rose on the wings of the wind, but swept unheeded past the lonely figure crouched upon those heaving boards.

IV.

It was seven o'clock, and in the road which ran past the churchyard was gathered a knot of anxious men. From time to time a passer-by joined the group, until within a very short space of time quite a considerable crowd was gazing up at the spire.

"I thought of it last night," the master steeplejack was saying, "when I heard the wind rising; and I shall be surprised if it don't drop pretty quickly. Why, it was as rotten as a pear when I examined it yesterday—hardly a scrap of mortar in the joints, and cracks—ah, as wide as your finger all the way down!"

"Can nothing be done?" asked one of the onlookers.

"Done?" replied the steeplejack contemptuously. "Of course it can. We might tie it up with ropes or prop it up with bits of wood; but there"—turning to his men—"it's no joking matter, and I'm only thankful that I don't take any risks under my contract. Any of you chaps feel like going up?"

There was a muttered growl of dissent, and the man continued:

"I should think not, indeed. No good could be done, and it would be sheer madness to—eh, what? Someone up there? Nonsense!"

He stepped back into the road, however, as he spoke, so as to command a better view, and looked anxiously aloft. Then he gave a great cry.

"It's right, chaps. Some fool has climbed it in the night, and—see" (he pointed to the swaying ladder), "that ladder we lashed temporarily has become unlashed, and he couldn't come down again."

He looked round as though to read the faces of his men.

"We can't leave him there," he cried. "Come—who'll follow me?"

With a spring he was upon the first ladder, swarming up with strong, sure strides, not troubling to look back, for he knew instinctively that where he went his men would follow.

Over the parapet of the tower—a second's breathing, then up again. He is at the foot of the hanging ladder now, and he stops, draws a

"IT'S OF NO USE CLINGING TO ME," SAID THE STEEPLEJACK.

lashing from his pocket, throws it out with a sure hand, catches the returning end, and pulls the foot in to him, hanging on all the time with feet intertwined among the rungs of the ladder he is upon.

One of his men is beneath and assists him in securing the lashing, then another line is made fast to its centre, and within the space of what has seemed an age to the waiting crowd below—though really but a matter of seconds—the steeplejack is climbing on to the scaffold. A big cheer goes up, but it is unheard at that dizzy height, with the wind shrieking and whistling and the scaffold giving great big thuds under the increased weight of two extra men.

"Well, you young——"

But the words are choked back as the boy falls into the strong arms, dropping from his nerveless grasp the handkerchief he had untied an hour ago and had been feebly waving in an endeavour to attract attention.

"This is a pretty go," growled the steeplejack. "We shall never get him down the ladders. It'll mean the bosun's chair, I can see, and that'll take half-an-hour to rig up. Half-an-hour on this, eh? How do you feel, Bill?"

For answer his man made a big grimace.

"It'll have to be done, anyhow, and all we can hope is that the blessed old thing won't go till we've finished. You'd better run down and get the block and fall out. I'll lower the service tackle."

The man had already swung himself off the scaffold, and was about to hurry down, when the voice of the steeplejack called him back.

"Hold on a minute, I think the boy's coming to, and if we can only manage it, it'll save a lot of risk. Here," (to Tom) "cheer up, old fellow; there're no necks broken. That's right, buck yourself up. I think he'll do, Bill; but he'll have to look quick about it, for, if you ask me, this old scaffold won't stand the three of us much longer in this gale."

The words reached Tom's ears and he faintly signified his readiness.

"Do you think you can manage to get down the ladders?"

"I'll try," replied Tom, with a queer shake in his voice.

"It won't be of much use trying," said the steeplejack grimly. "When you start you've got to finish. Now, Bill, you stand by ready to receive him, while I lower him over."

But Tom hung on so that it was a difficult matter to accomplish.

"It's of no use clinging to me," said the steeplejack at last, after several ineffectual attempts. "You are in our hands and we shan't let you fall. Think what every minute here means, and be a man, do."

There could have been no better appeal to the boy, and he allowed himself to be lowered over, the man below receiving him almost in his arms and guiding his feet on to the rungs.

It was a long, slow climb down, and a perilous one, too, for there were three upon one ladder at every step, neither of the men daring to leave Tom to himself. At last the tower platform was reached, and the steeplejack gave an exclamation of relief.

"Whew," he said, mopping his forehead vigorously, "that's about the tightest job ever I've had, and I don't want another like it. Buck up, lad—over you go!"

It was comparatively easy work now, and Tom stepped almost fearlessly over the parapet, on to the ladder, and stood a minute later the centre of a white-faced crowd, which cheered and shook the steeplejack and his man by the hand, and generally made an idiot of itself, as crowds will when swayed by strong emotions.

* * * * *

It was long before Tom recovered from the shock of his night aloft. His sufferings had been so real and the punishment for his disobedience so severe that he was spared the infliction of a reprimand. Out of evil comes good at times, however, and it came in this instance; for Tom, sobered by his adventure, thenceforth took himself more seriously. He realised that his mother had not paid Mr. Mortimer a premium merely that he might sit on a stool and idle away his time, so he plunged into his work, and eventually emerged from his apprenticeship a clever young architect.

THE STAMPS OF EGYPT.

THE "Making of Modern Egypt," according to Sir Auckland Colvin, may be dated from the commencement of the nineteenth century. He tells us that "in 1806 an Albanian soldier, with little but his own genius and courage to support him, after a trial of strength with the Turkish deputy of the Sultan, was himself nominated by the Porte to be Wali or Governor of Egypt. Little by little the power of Muhammad Ali, the Albanian, consolidated itself, and his ambi-

THE KHEDIVE.

tions grew," till finally, in 1841, he held the Sultan's firman, conferring on him and his family the right for ever, subject to annual tribute, of succession to the Egyptian throne. Abbas Pasha, and after him Said Pasha, succeeded Muhammad Ali; then, in 1863, came Ismail Pasha, who treated the soil of Egypt as his to dispose of as he would, and the native of Egypt as a slave to cultivate the land for the benefit of his ruler. At his accession the public debt of Egypt was less than four millions sterling; by 1879 he had run it up to over one hundred million pounds sterling. Then the British and French Governments interfered on behalf of European creditors, and Ismail was deposed by the Sultan at their instance and expelled from Egypt in June 1879.

Sir Auckland Colvin thus describes the condition of the country at the deposition of Ismail:

"The country was in the utmost misery; the indebtedness of the fellah was universal; there was no justice; no order, or system, in the collection of the land revenue and taxes. The finances were bankrupt, and the European creditor was in possession. The governing body, few in number, were, with rare exceptions, devoid of character, probity, and intelligence. The Government could not, and would not if it could, turn to Constantinople; for the Sultan was known to desire nothing more than a pretext for resuming the firmans which he had granted to the rulers of Egypt. The army, composed mainly of Egyptians, were the brothers and sons of the unhappy taxpayers. The sympathies of all ranks of the army were necessarily with their countrymen."

Then came the military revolt headed by Arabi Pasha and its suppression by British forces; after which, as a necessary consequence, and because of the withdrawal of France from the dual control by the Western Powers on behalf of the European creditor, the British Government undertook, single-handed, the relief and reorganisation of Egypt.

"The success of the military operations undertaken by her Majesty's Government to suppress the late rebellion in Egypt," wrote Lord Granville to Lord Dufferin on November 3, 1882, "has placed them in a position of authority, and of corresponding responsibility, in regard to the future government of that country. Her Majesty's Government, while desiring that British occupation should last

for as short a time as possible, feel bound not to withdraw from the task thus imposed on them, until the administration of affairs has been reconstructed on a basis which will afford satisfactory guarantees for the maintenance of peace, order, and prosperity in Egypt, for the stability of the Khedive's authority, for the judicious development of self-government, and for the fulfilment of obligations towards foreign Powers. These objects are in the real interest of Egypt, of this country, and of Europe."

The British "administration of affairs" still continues, and the withdrawal seems to be as far off as ever. In the opinion of many the British occupation must some day end in the proclamation of a Protectorate. Recent events have emphasised the necessity for firmness in British rule. Abbâs Hilmi has succeeded his father Tewfik, but he holds under the firman of the Sultan.

The present situation is thus summed up by Sir Auckland Colvin in his great book on "The Making of Modern Egypt": "Since the accession of Khedive Abbâs Hilmi, two important factors have been created, which have gone far to modify the situation as he received it from his father. The British flag floats in the Soudan beside the Egyptian standard; and all Europe, following the lead of France, has recognised the paramount interest of Great Britain in Egypt. The significance of the first factor speaks for itself. As to the other, the first Article of the Agreement of April 8, 1904, lays down that while Great Britain has no intention of altering the political status of Egypt, the Government of the French Republic declares for its part that it will not obstruct the action of Great Britain in that country by asking that a limit of time be fixed for the British occupation, or in any other manner."

Meanwhile, the country is becoming Europeanised, but the Turk has still a nominal share in its administration, and its people are fettered and prejudiced by the precepts and prohibitions of the creed of an effete civilisation.

Its Philatelic History.

It seems strange to speak of the philatelic history of the land of the Pharaohs, but though much of a past civilisation clings to the country, it is, under a more enlightened administration, slowly emerging from its past.

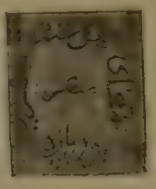
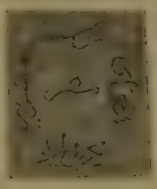
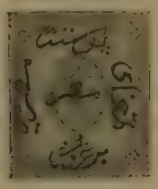
In 1866, during the reign of the spendthrift Ismail Pasha, the first postage stamps were issued; they were designed for inland use only, foreign letters having to be forwarded through the foreign post offices established in Alexandria. This first issue, printed in Genoa, consisted of seven values each of a separate design, and each was overprinted with a Turkish inscription in the shape of an oval. In 1867 this series was superseded by one of uniform design, six values, consisting of a pyramid and sphinx. The stamps were drawn on a lithographic stone and printed in Alexandria. This in turn was superseded in 1872 by a very rough series, turned out, apparently, by native printers in Cairo. The design was similar to the last issue. In 1879 the remaining stock of the 2½ piastres, for which there was little demand, was surcharged and used up as 5 paras and 10 paras stamps. In 1879 Messrs. De la Rue

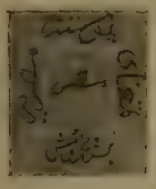
LORD CROMER.

and Co. designed, engraved, and printed the still current series, retaining as the central figure of the design the pyramid and sphinx

The stamps of Egypt are comparatively low priced; they offer a fine field for the young collector who desires to specialise in a country with great possibilities, for if, as we believe, the inevitable end is to be a British Protectorate, then those who take up the country now and stick to it will have good reason to congratulate themselves on their choice some fine day when its stamps are transferred from the Foreign Countries Section of our catalogues to the British Colonial Section.

1866. Seven values. Design differing in each value; each value overprinted with a Turkish inscription, oval in shape; on the left is the word "Masrije" or Egyptian, at the top "Eusta" or postage, and on the right "Tamgaï" or stamp. The inscription at the foot contains the value in letters. These stamps were intended for inland use only, foreign letters having to be forwarded as before by one of the foreign post offices established in Alexandria. They were printed by Fratelli Pellas, in Genoa, on paper watermarked with a pyramid, on the top of which was a ten-rayed star, except the 1 piastre, which, for some unexplained reason, was printed on unwatermarked paper. The stamps were perforated, but many were issued imperf. Our illustrations are made from imperf. copies because they yield the clearest copies for reproduction.

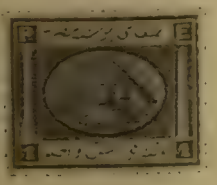


Wmk. Pyramid. Perf.

	Unused. s.	d.		Used. s.	d.
5 paras, grey	4	0	..	4	0
10 paras, brown	10	0	..	10	0
20 paras, blue	10	0	..	8	0
1 piastre, mauve	2	0	..	1	0
2 piastres, yellow	8	0	..	6	0
5 piastres, rose	30	0	..	30	0
10 piastres, slate-blue	35	0	..	35	0

1867.—Six values. Design, pyramid and sphinx in an oval enclosed in an oblong rectangular frame. The para values have the word "Para" in the upper corners and the piastre "P" in the left upper corner and "E" in the right corner as an abbreviation of piastre. In the centre upper label are the Arabic words, "Tamgaï Posta Masrie" in Arabic characters, meaning "Egyptian postage stamp." The two bottom corners contain the figures of value, and between is the value in Arabic characters. In the left-hand portion of the frame is a representation of Pompey's pillar, and in the right of Cleopatra's needle. These stamps were drawn on the lithographic stone by F. Hoff from Silesia and printed by V. Penasson in Alexandria. This series is much rarer than its catalogue price would indicate. Mint copies, with full gum and well centred, are extremely scarce. I have been specialising in the country for some years, and have gone through many of the best dealers' stocks, and yet can boast of satisfactory copies of only three of the lower values.

The stamps of this series were printed on paper watermarked with a crescent and star, and perforated.

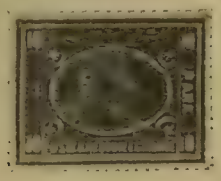


Wmk. Crescent and Star, perf.

	Unused. s.	d.		Used. s.	d.
8 paras, yellow	1	6	..	0	6
10 paras, mauve	2	0	..	2	0
20 paras, green	2	0	..	0	9
1 piastre, red	0	6	..	0	1
2 piastres, blue	5	0	..	2	6
5 piastres, brown	15	0	..	12	6

1872–5.—Seven values. Design similar to that of the last issue, but the pyramid is more to the right and the sphinx more to the left. The figures of value appear in all four corners in each value. In the upper label between the figures of value is an Arabic inscription reading, "Poste Khedevie Masrie," and in the bottom label, in Italian, "Poste Khedeuie Egiziane," both meaning "Post of the Egyptian Khedivate." On the left-hand side label is the value in Arabic, and on the right-hand side the inscription Para, Piastra, or Piastre in Italian. These stamps were lithographed in the Government offices in Cairo. The paper

was impressed with a crescent and star, to serve the purpose of a watermark. This impressed watermark, if I may so term it, can best be seen by holding the stamps up to the light and looking through them. The design was very roughly drawn and the printing was even worse.

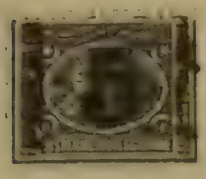


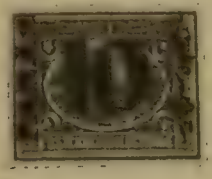
Wmk. (impressed) Crescent and Star. Perf.

	Unused. s. d.		Used. s. d.
5 paras, brown	0 2	..	0 1
10 paras, mauve	0 3	..	0 4
20 paras, blue	0 4	..	0 2
1 piastre, red	0 4	..	0 1
2 piastres, yellow	0 6	..	0 2
2½ piastres, purple	0 9	..	0 9
5 piastres, green	1 6	..	2 0

Towards the end of 1874, according to Mr. Duerst, a specialist in Egyptians, the stock of 5 para stamps got very low and a fresh supply was printed at the Government offices by native printers. The result was such a topsy-turvy arrangement that not a single stamp on the sheet was correct, centres and frames being incorrectly arranged in the most extraordinary manner.

1879.—*Provisionals.* Two values. Design: a surcharge on the 2½ piastres of the previous issue. It seems that there was very little demand for the new value of 2½ piastres included in the previous series, and with a view of using up the stock, the remainders were surcharged for use as 5 paras and 10 paras stamps. One hundred and seventy thousand of each value were surcharged.

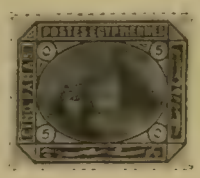


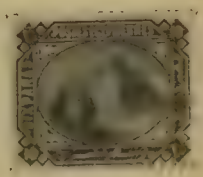


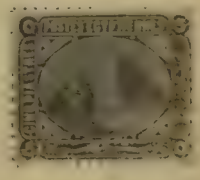
Provisionals.

	Unused. s. d.		Used. s. d.
5 paras on 2½ piastres	0 4	..	0 6
10 paras on 2½ piastres	1 0	..	0 6

1879.—Six values. Design: pyramid and sphinx in an oval the same for all values, but in each value enclosed in a differing framework. Engraved by Messrs. De la Rue and Co. in London and printed by them on paper watermarked with the crescent and star, and perforated.







Wmk. Crescent and Star. Perf.

	Unused. s. d.		Used. s. d.
5 paras, brown	0 1	..	0 1
10 paras, mauve	0 3	..	0 4
10 paras, blue-grey	0 3	..	0 1
20 paras, blue	0 4	..	0 1
1 piastre, rose	0 6	..	0 1
2 piastres, orange	2 0	..	0 1
5 piastres, green	5 0	..	0 6

1884.—*Provisional.* One value. The 5 piastres of the last issue surcharged "20 paras" in black.

Provisional.

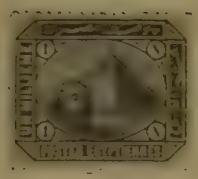
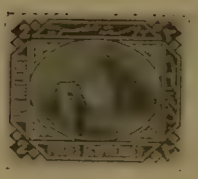
	Unused. s. d.		Used. s. d.
20 paras on 5 piastres	0 3	..	0 4

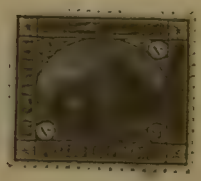
1884.—Colours changed. Four values. Design as in last series. The 10 paras changed from grey to green, the 20 paras from blue to rose, the 1 piastre from rose to blue, and the 5 piastres from green to slate.

Colours changed.

	Unused. s. d.		Used. s. d.
10 paras, green	0 1	..	0 1
20 paras, rose	0 4	..	0 1
1 piastre, blue	0 3	..	0 1
5 piastres, slate	2 0	..	0 1

1888-92.—Eight values. Design: the same pyramid and sphinx in an oval, but enclosed in a different framework, and the values changed from paras and piastres to milliemes and piastres. Watermarked crescent and star, and perforated.



Wmk. Crescent and Star. Perf.

	Unused.		Used.
	s. d.		s. d.
1 milliem, brown	0 1	..	0 1
2 milliemes, green	0 1	..	0 1
3 milliemes, orange	0 1	..	0 1
5 milliemes, carmine	0 2	..	0 1
1 piastre, blue	0 4	..	0 1
2 piastres, orange-brown	0 8	..	0 1
5 piastres, slate	—	..	
10 piastres, violet	3 [illegible]	..	0 2

Reviews.

"Countries and Stamps."

Under this title Miss Harriet E. Colville writes what she terms "A simple and accurate Historical Guide to the Postage Stamps of the British Empire," which is being published in 2½*d.* monthly parts by Messrs. Chas. J. Endle and Co., of Bournemouth.

The Guide is made up of very brief summaries. Here is a specimen: "Negri Sembilan is a confederacy of small States in the interior of the Malay peninsula. It now includes Sunjei Ujong, which is separately represented in our stamp albums from 1876 to 1895. The stamps of Negri Sembilan date only from 1891, when the 2 cents, rose, of the Straits Settlements, watermarked Crown and CA, first bore the surcharge 'Sembilan.' The tiger types followed, and were surcharged with fresh values in 1899." The surcharge was "Negri Sembilan," not "Sembilan." We do not quite see what useful purpose such bare and inadequate summaries can serve.

Gibbons' Catalogue. Part I.

We have already noticed the issue of Part II., Foreign Countries, the publication of which has preceded that of Part I., British Empire, just received. In this Colonial Section the Fiji Islands list has been entirely re-written from the fine collection formed by Mr. C. J. Phillips and exhibited at the International Exhibition recently held in London. In the matter of prices the principal changes are a marked advance in most of the single CA. issues of the King's head type, otherwise there are few changes.

The Stamp Market.

Under this heading we propose to notice from time to time the many excellent trade lists sent us by dealers.

Mr. W. H. Peckitt, 47 Strand, London, W.C., sends us his "New Bargain List," full of tempting offers of single watermark King's heads and Colonial stamps in mint, unused condition. The list is supplied post free on application, and those who want single CA. King's heads should seize the opportunity of filling up gaps while they may of these rising stamps.

From Mr. H. Bean, 164 Loughborough Park, London, S.W., we have received a "Reference Register of Reliable Exchange Clubs and Philatelists," and we commend it to those who wish to join an Exchange Club. A notice on the cover states that "the Reference Register, being published by subscription, will not be on sale anywhere. It can only be obtained through the Secretaries of the Exchange Clubs included in its pages, and is *only* to be supplied to those whose names are found therein or who furnish satisfactory references, &c., to the compiler, Mr. Bean, and desire to be included therein."

A neat little waistcoat-pocket stamp-case comes from Messrs. Henry Abel and Co., of Walsall. It is provided with a couple of linen shelves sufficient to hold a score of duplicates, and an additional pocket for a further batch.

From our old friends Messrs. Whitfield King and Co. we have a comprehensive list of packets and sets in sufficient variety to empty the pockets of any number of our young enthusiasts.

Messrs. Ventom, Bull, and Cooper, of 35 Old Jewry, London, E.C., Messrs. Puttick and Simpson, 47 Leicester Square, London, W.C., and Messrs. Glendining and Co., of 7 Argyll Street, London, W., send us catalogues of forthcoming stamp auctions, all of which may be had for the asking.

Silkworms.—H. A. Webb (Linton, Herefordshire) sends me several silkworms which have mysteriously died, in spite of great care in feeding, &c. This, H. A. W., is a common experience of most silkworm breeders. Unfortunately, the bodies were so dried and shrivelled by the time they reached me that I should not like to venture upon an opinion as to the cause of death. Many larvæ sicken and die when about to change their skins, and silkworms are no exception. Sometimes when fed exclusively upon lettuce, as yours were, they suffer from a kind of diarrhœa which is fatal; and some again fall victims to a parasitical fungus which destroys their internal organs. I am inclined to think this last was the cause of your trouble. There is a good little work on Silkworms by E. A. Butler in the Young Collector Series (Sonnenschein, 1*s*.) which may be useful to you another season; but you must not expect to rear a brood without any losses. If you could obtain mulberry leaves you would find them a more satisfactory food for your silkworms after the first few weeks.

Tortoises.—D. Gregory (Manchester) writes to say that one of his Tortoises (species not mentioned) has laid an egg, and will I kindly tell him how to hatch it and how many days he must wait before seeing the young Tortoise emerge? Also, what should he feed the young one upon? This is something like counting chickens before they are hatched; and I fear that D. Gregory has been disappointed. No advice that I could have given him would have been of use, for he added in a postscript: "I have put it on the coolest part of the oven covered with dry loose earth. Is this right?" I have not heard what happened, but it is safe to presume that before the letter reached me, the egg was cooked. It is very probable that the egg would not have hatched under any circumstances; but the proper thing to have done would have been to place the egg on a bed of sand in the sun and cover it with a glass. The food for a young tortoise would be the same as for its parent, and concerning that I must refer D. G. to the previous replies given on this subject.—J. T. (Ealing) asks what to do with his European Water-tortoise to keep it alive during the winter. Keep it in a *cool* room where there is no fire, but where it will be protected from frost.

Entomological.—We have this month received a large number of entomological queries, and insects to name. Some of our friends who send moths loose in boxes appear to have a notion that such boxes are carried carefully by hand from one end of the kingdom to the other. The mere dropping of the package into the post-office box is sufficient shock to ruin such delicate specimens; but in addition they have much shaking and jolting before they reach their destination, when some of them are broken or rubbed so as to be beyond recognition. It will therefore be understood that the lot of the naturalist who has to try to name them is not a happy one, and in some cases failure is inevitable. Here, for example, is F. W. J. Belton (Chester), who prides himself upon the fact that he has so far heeded my warnings as to send his specimens in a tin-box this time. But fancy putting three pinned moths *loose* in a box of any kind! The large dark-brown moth had lost a wing and suffered other damage; but I was able to identify it as the Old Lady (*Mania maura*). The middle-sized grey one (terribly worn) appears to be the Dark Arches (*Xylophasia polyodon*); but of the small one only the body and some unrecognisable fragments of wings were left. The "fly" is one of the larger Ichneumons or Cuckoo-wasps, four-winged insects (all true flies have two wings only) that lay their eggs in caterpillars. I have returned specimens as desired, but they are of no use to any one.—Phyllis H. Arundel (Pontefract) sends me a couple of living caterpillars, and asks for their name. She says, "I can only find this caterpillar in one field; it is very numerous there.

CATERPILLAR OF BROOM MOTH.
Three-fourths natural size.

and judging from some I have kept, appears to thrive best on Dandelion leaves." The very handsome insect is the caterpillar of the Broom Moth (*Hadena pisi*), and Dandelion is rather an unusual food for it. As its name indicates, its reputed food is Broom, but I believe it is more frequently found on Bracken. As a rule, the dark longitudinal bands, which were purple-brown in the specimens sent, are green. I have had a drawing made of the larger one.—W. O. R. Wynuff (Barrow-in-Furness) also sends me a caterpillar which he rightly describes as a remarkable example of mimicry. It was feeding on a rose-tree, and as I have had a drawing made of it, readers will be able to judge of the sharp sight required to detect it. The deception is aided by its colour, which is a dull grey-green with an irregular reddish streak down the back and several little red

CATERPILLAR OF PEPPERED MOTH.
Three-fourths natural size.

protuberances on the skin which look like the beginnings of shoots. Altogether, its resemblance to a rose-shoot is very close. It is the caterpillar of a large grey moth known as the Peppered Moth (*Amphidasys betularia*), and it is more usually found feeding on Birch, Oak, Lime, or other trees.—D. E. Tyler (Ash, Kent), who appears to be an entomologist of some experience, sends me a moth of which he says: "It appears to be fairly common here, but in none of our books can I find an illustration or a description that seems to fit it. It seems to be one of the Plusiidæ." That is so; it is *Plusia moneta*, a Continental species that first made its appearance here about 1890, and has been turning up occasionally, until about five years ago it appeared to have settled down with us. In the last two or three seasons considerable numbers of the larvæ have been found in gardens feeding upon Monk's-hood (*Aconitum napellus*) and Larkspurs (*Delphinium*). This brief statement will explain why D. E. T. has failed to find any account of it in the books; but it is to be hoped that so beautiful an insect will have to find a place in all future books on British moths. For the benefit of those of my readers who have not yet seen this novelty, I have had it drawn from a "set" specimen. It should be stated that the fore-wings are of dull gold, streaked with golden-

PLUSIA MONETA.
Natural size.

brown, and that in the centre is a kidney-shaped spot of burnished light gold with a dull centre. Captainites who have either of the plants named growing in their gardens, should examine the centres of the new shoots in early spring, and may be rewarded by finding the caterpillars.—W. H. S. (Cheltenham) sends me an account of a large green caterpillar with mauve and white stripes on its sides that he saw walking across the grass. One cannot often identify caterpillars from popular descriptions, but in this case, aided by W. H. S.'s rough sketch, I have little doubt that it was the larva of the Privet Hawk-moth (*Sphinx ligustri*), one of our largest and handsomest caterpillars, and which I believe has already been illustrated in this "Corner."—"Brin" (Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire) also describes a caterpillar he found walking on a road, which appears to me to be that of the Puss-moth (*Cerura vinula*). It feeds on Poplar and Willow. Leslie Speller (Dulwich) asks several questions relating to insect collecting. (*a*) You cannot expect to get a satisfactory work on both butterflies and moths for a shilling. There is one entitled "Butterflies, Moths and Beetles," by W. F. Kirby, in the

Young Collector Series, but I do not happen to have actual acquaintance with it. Then Mr. Upcott Gill publishes a shilling handbook on "Butterfly and Moth Collecting." Coleman's "British Butterflies" (Routledge) is a good shilling book, though rather out of date; but the moths are far too big a group to be treated in such small compass. (*b*) You do not want to mix ammonia and laurel leaves for your killing-bottle. The ammonia is all right alone, but the bruised laurel leaves (also alone) are more suitable for beetles. (*c*) "The best way to keep moths, &c., after setting" is largely a question of £ *s. d.* The most approved plan is to keep them in air-tight cabinet drawers, but those whose means do not allow of the cabinet are content to keep them in "store boxes," which can be obtained in various sizes of Messrs. Watkins and Doncaster, 36 Strand, and other dealers, at prices to suit your purse.

African Locusts.—W.A.Cook (Cape Town) and "Rockcliff" (Johannesburg) write to say that Jack Chapman's name of "foot-hangers" for these insects must have been due to a misunderstanding of the Dutch "voet-gangers," which means "foot-goers." This has practically been put right in the additional information given last month by "Tommy" (Barkly East), but I am indebted to my latest informants all the same. "Rockcliff" adds that "the usual way of dealing with the pest is to get a lot of natives with sticks to drive them up against a low V-shaped fence of corrugated iron extending for miles across the veldt, over which the 'voet-gangers' cannot jump, and at the apex of which a deep pit is dug, into which the insects fall, and out of which they cannot get. Once they get their wings they cannot be dealt with at all, and the only thing farmers can do is to set on fire the bushes in which the locusts rest at night." Altogether, I think the publication of those photos. has elicited a considerable amount of interesting information about Locusts.

Crows.—W. N. Montgomery (Deanshanger) asks if it is unusual for Crows to steal Guinea-fowls' eggs. For some time all the Guinea-fowls' eggs have disappeared from the nests, and "to-day I found an egg which had been dropped by a Crow in a field half a mile from where they lay." The Crows are great pests to game preservers owing to their depredations among the eggs, so there is nothing unusua in their availing themselves of the Guinea-fowls' eggs if they had the chance.

Linnean Society.—In answer to L. N. H. (Godalming), the address of the secretary of the Linnean Society is B. Daydon Jackson, Esq., F.L.S., Burlington House, London, W.

Taxidermy.—E.P. Lewis (Shepherd's Bush) asks me to tell him the way to stuff small birds, and what to use to preserve the skins. This would require a long article such as the Corner does not provide sufficient space for. You should get Wood's "British Bird Preserver" (Frederick Warne and Co., 1*s.*) or Browne's "Practical Taxidermy" (Upcott Gill, 7*s.* 6*d.*). Skins are preserved with preservative soap, to be obtained from Watkins and Doncaster, 36 Strand, at 1*s.* per tin. You can also obtain artificial eyes and all other requisites from the same firm.

Snakes, &c.—A. H. (Oldham) wants books on foreign snakes and the vivarium. Get Hopley's "Serpent Life" (Griffith and Farran, 16*s*) and Bateman's "Vivarium" (Upcott Gill, 7*s.* 6*d.*). There are no cheaper works on these subjects.

Dogs.—Ernest Russell (Pollokshiels) wants advice about a Fox-terrier that is always moulting. This is a sign of bad management and improper feeding, which if continued may result in baldness and other troubles. Put the dog on a vegetable diet, and apply a weak ointment of cantharides, rubbed in two or three times a week. Knock off the meat, butter, and milk, and give an iron tonic. I should take him to a vet., and act on his advice. —R. H. R. (Southampton). The questions you ask have more relation to sport than to natural history, and I do not feel competent to advise you as to your chances of prize-winning. The requirements of "the fancy" are quite artificial, and often barbarous.

Birds'-eggs.—N. B. Laughton (Islay). Your No. 1 I cannot make anything of, unless it is a tortoise's egg. Have you such a creature about? It is impossible to speak with certainty about many eggs when considered without relation to their nests; but No. 2 appears to be that of the Kestrel; No. 3, Jackdaw; No. 4, Magpie; and No. 5, Carrion Crow.

In Search of Smith,

A Romance of Unexplored Australia.

By JOHN MACKIE.

Illustrated by R. Caton Woodville.

SYNOPSIS.

Richard Payne, a retired surgeon, who in his earlier days had been connected with the Army, meets, at Southville Hydro., his old regimental colleague, General Sir Donald Taylor, now also on the retired list. Sir Donald tells Payne that he is anxious to discover the whereabouts of a great friend of his named Smith, who according to the latest accounts was held captive by blacks in the unexplored region of North Queensland. The General prevails upon Payne to accompany him, and they set off to Australia together with Sir Donald's son, Jack, the latter's tutor Maitland, and Parker, a manservant. On arriving in Australia they go to the house of the General's sister, whose daughter, Madge, is a typical specimen of the fearless bush girl. While Madge is on the way to catch her horse she is interfered with by a bad blackfellow named Crocodile, and Parker goes to her rescue. At the conclusion of the first instalment, the blackfellow is about to attack the manservant.

CHAPTER IV.—(*continued*).

WE MAKE AN ENEMY.

WHEN Madge turned to pick up the piece of splintered rail she felt that Parker would fall an easy victim to the superior prowess of the aboriginal. No new chum, to her mind, could cope, single-handed, with a blackfellow, for many a native-born Australian came out of such contests second best. Wherefore she reached for the broken rail to lend effective aid to Parker by hitting Crocodile on the head at the first opening. But Madge was to learn that a new arrival is not always the helpless simpleton bush folk are apt to regard him.

Crocodile sprang straight at his foe with a leap as mighty as the one he had made to get on Barney's back. As he jumped he brought his knees up to his chin with the intention of kicking out at the white man when he came upon him. Had that intention been carried out, Parker's history would have had a sad and sudden termination. The trooper, however, had not wasted his years in the army. Besides the British arts of boxing and wrestling he had also given passing heed to the rules of jiu-jitsu and savate. Crocodile had unconsciously undertaken what the Americans term "a big contract" when he took on Parker.

As the black came through the air, his doubled-up legs on a level with Parker's chest, that worthy promptly ducked, rising, with lowered head and rounded back, just as the blackfellow passed above him. The crash which startled Madge was the impact of Parker's shoulder with the blackfellow's huddled frame, and as she swung round she saw Crocodile flying, spread-eagled, through the air, clearing the three-rail fence by a couple of feet. Parker stood watching the flight of the black and calculating where he would meet the ground. There was a tree stump in the line of flight, and Parker, with the true sporting instinct, hoped his rival would not fall on it and so render himself unserviceable for a second round.

The black missed the stump and came to the ground beyond it, rolling over like a shot rabbit. To the amazement of Parker he was on his feet again in a moment, and, with a shake like that of a dog coming out of the water, he pulled himself together and dashed at his opponent. He cleared the fence at a bound and was on Parker before that worthy could deliver even a left to stop the rush. There was no jump this time. The long sinewy black arms were round the white man with a grip of iron. Together they swayed and struggled, Parker striving to get free of the clinging arms and Crocodile trying to writhe his legs also round his enemy.

Backwards and forwards they staggered, now one, now the other gaining a slight advantage. While it was strength for strength the match was fairly even, too even, indeed, for the black, who saw that he would have to outwit his adversary in some way. His quick eyes caught sight, over Parker's shoulder, of a thick-set thorn bush, a shrub that is a veritable vegetable porcupine with the additional faculty of producing an irritating sore wherever the flesh is wounded by one of the thorns. He gave way a trifle, and Parker, seizing the opening, put forth all his strength to force his man to the ground. With a quick sideward lurch Crocodile had Parker off his balance, and the next moment the white man was swung backwards into the thorn-bush.

Madge sprang to Parker's assistance, for Crocodile was already stooping to grasp a stone. The trooper had hardly risen to his feet when it caught him in the chest, leaving a bruise that lived for weeks to rankle as a reminder of the black's strength. Missing a second tumble into the thorns by barely a foot, Parker went in to finish the black. It was no longer a matter of rules; shying stones at a man when he was down, and that in a thorn-bush, settled the question in Parker's mind. Crocodile wore no belt, so the trooper got his blows in where he could, treating the one spectator of that conflict to an exhilarating exhibition of jiu-jitsu, savate, and boxing—a compound as effective as it was bewildering.

Five minutes only elapsed before Crocodile, very sore and very sad, hung over the three-rail fence like a wet rag on a clothes-line.

"'Ad enough?" demanded the trooper, triumphantly. "If not, there's more waiting."

Crocodile looked at him out of the only eye he could get open; then he sank to the ground, wriggled under the lower rail of the fence, and painfully dragged himself to the shelter of a patch of scrub. At the edge of the scrub he regained his feet.

"By-um-bye, white fellow, by-um-bye. My word, you catch it plenty."

A stick he had picked up whizzed through the air straight for Parker's head as the black vanished into the scrub.

"There's gratitood for yer," the incensed Parker exclaimed as he dodged it. "I knocks 'im out in tip-top style wiv all the tricks I knows and then 'e' eaves wood at me! Wot a sportsman!"

At that moment, Barney came up to the fence and neighed. "Come on, old boy, I want you," Madge exclaimed as she turned towards the horse.

"I'll get the bridle, miss," Parker said and

MADGE SPRANG TO PARKER'S ASSISTANCE.

set off at a run, only to stop short with a sort of bark—for a thousand wasps seemed to have settled on him and commenced stinging.

"Don't run," Madge cried. "You're full of thorn bush prickles. Go back to the house and ask the doctor to take them out. Ride Barney if you like."

Parker looked at the horse, and a remembrance of those mighty buck-jumps that had unseated Crocodile came to him. "Thanks, miss. I'll—I'll try 'im another day," he said.

"Very well—then I'll ride him."

She skipped over to where the bridle lay, put it on Barney's head, and, with a spring that made Parker hold his breath in admiration, she was on the horse, sitting, barebacked, better than he had ever seen a woman sit a horse before.

CHAPTER V.

THE THRESHOLD OF THE NEVER-NEVER.

I BEGAN to realise the reward my sacrifices had earned when I saw the look of blank incredulity and amazement that came to the face of the General as Madge, immediately on her return to the station, informed us that she had decided to accompany us.

"What! *You* come with us!" he exclaimed, when he could find words at all.

Madge turned to her mother.

"They'll go fairly near the headwaters of the MacArthur, and I told the Millars I might look them up sometime," she said, talking as a girl might talk of paying an afternoon call in the next street. "The Baileys can come along, too; it will be a good chance for them."

"Excellent," Mrs. Taylor answered in the same unconcerned tone. "How long do you think you'll stay?"

"I ought to be back in three or four months, I should say," Madge replied.

The General looked from one to the other, open-mouthed and open-eyed.

"It isn't quite safe to let them go by themselves—they must have some one who knows the bush with them or there's no saying what may happen," Madge continued, and I saw the General's hands drop to his sides in consternation. He, a distinguished strategist, the commander of British troops, ready to go anywhere and do anything, in Egypt, in India, in South Africa, in Abyssinia—anywhere that difficulties, danger and destruction threatened—he—he to need the guidance of a slip of a girl through the Bush!

"I should feel more satisfied," Mrs. Taylor said, "and it will be a little change for you to look up the Millars. You might bring one of the girls back with you."

The General exploded. "May I ask——" he began.

Madge turned a pair of demure eyes upon him.

"My dear uncle," she said, "I must remind you that you're only a new chum. What can you possibly know of Australia? That is why I am coming with you on this trip." The General winced to hear his carefully planned expedition referred to as a "trip." "You would only lose yourselves as soon as you lost sight of the fences—you know there are no fences in unoccupied country, nor tracks, nor anything save bush—when a man says he has not seen a fence for months we know he has been out back. You would be bushed—lost, that is— in an hour, if you had no fences to guide you, or somebody who knows the bush with you. So *I* shall come."

The General looked from the frank blue eyes of his niece to those of his sister-in-law.

"Madge is quite right," Mrs. Taylor said. "Besides, she wants to see some old school friends of hers on the MacArthur River, and she may just as well travel with you as with the Baileys—a stockman and his wife who are going from us to the Millars. They can also go with you."

The General was cornered; I saw his glance waver for the first time in my life. "Of course—yes—but——"

Madge went up to him and patted him on the shoulder. "The matter is settled," she said quietly. "There is nothing more to be said. The Baileys and I will join you when you pass from Burketown. Now we'll have some tea."

The matter *was* settled. The disciplinarian, the martinet, the invincible conqueror of Arab, Afghan, and Afrikander was as a lamb in the hands of this girl. What a nation that great Southern Land will become with such women as Madge Taylor—who was no exception to the rule—to help in the building!

We returned to Burketown, and within a week had made all necessary arrangements, effected our equipment, and were ready to start. The cool season—it was April—had hardly commenced, so that travelling would be comparatively pleasant. We formed quite a respectable cavalcade with two large waggons, each drawn by twelve horses with a driver and offsider to each team, and a hooded light spring-cart which was given over to Madge and Bailey's wife. The latter was a cheerful, active, and resourceful woman. Madge had her own horse, and always rode in preference to travelling in the spring-cart.

We had plenty of spare horses, which were put in charge of a couple of semi-civilised black boys we had brought with us from Normanton. These boys—black men are always called "boys"—were from the Gilbert River, and so, being out of their own country, could be depended upon for loyalty. The Australian blacks are ever more ready to kill blacks belonging to another tribe than they are to kill whites, and that is saying a good deal. Their safety, therefore, lay in our safety.

We men folk were always in our shirt sleeves—the latter rolled up to the elbow—with felt or cabbage tree hats, and moleskin trousers. No one dreamt of wearing such things as collars, coats, or waistcoats. A clean handkerchief tied round the neck made one feel quite fashionable. Each of us was armed with a Colt's revolver, and when we got farther out into the wild country a short carbine, or sporting rifle, was carried by a gun-bucket strapped to the saddle. Even Madge never neglected this precaution.

Our first stage of sixteen miles was perhaps one of the most trying in the whole journey, for it lay across a parched, treeless plain, on which the heated air-waves danced, playing all sorts of weird tricks with the horizon. At one time Maitland and I, looking back, were considerably astonished to see Burketown, with its galvanised iron buildings, quivering in mid-air, literally without any visible means of support, and twisted into all manner of fantastic shapes. At other times we could see a gigantic tree loom up ahead, which, when we approached, would, to our utter bewilderment, dwindle to an insignificant shrub, or tuft of coarse grass.

Our pace was slow, and what with the dust and the heat we were all very glad when, well on in the afternoon, a dark belt of trees, which had kept appearing and disappearing tantalisingly for the last hour or two, now showed up substantially and refreshingly green. It marked the Gregory river, and the spectacle of clear water flowing over a pebbly and sandy bed, in a beautifully wooded, palm-fringed dell, was indeed a sight for sore eyes. Strangely enough, the Gulf country, as it is termed in Australia, although one of the hottest places in the world, is remarkably well watered. This beautiful little valley, with its limpid pools shaded by graceful palms, and greenest foliage shot with vari-coloured blossoms hardly less brilliant than the plumage of the birds, seemed to us a vision of fairy-land. Its beauty, indeed, was beyond description.

The butterflies, some of them as large as one's hand, were masterpieces of design and colouring. The greatest genius the world ever produced could not have conceived anything so exquisitely beautiful.

It was here Madge showed us some of the many wonderful things in Nature that opened to us realms the like of which neither Grimm nor Hans Andersen had at their command. She took us down to a shallow pool, told us to look into it, and asked us what we saw. I could see nothing unusual, but Maitland remarked the presence of short pieces of grass resembling chopped hay.

"Watch them," said Madge.

When she put her hand into the water and touched them, they were as *débris* and nothing more. She motioned us back from the pool, and as we watched I confess to having had a suspicion that the girl meditated some sort of practical joke. But as we looked the little lengths of grass and tiny twigs began to shoot out heads shaped like stove-pipes, and long spindly legs. In a minute or so the pool was alive with some of the most active and extraordinary aquatic creatures one could well imagine. Madge had shown us an example of the way Nature imitates environment for protection.

She turned to a tree hard by. At the base of it, scattered on the ground, was the usual *débris*, amongst which were a few tiny dead leaves, though here I may say few leaves in Australia fall—the trees shed their bark instead. Madge regarded them closely, then pointed to what appeared to be an ordinary leaf.

"What's that?" she asked.

"A leaf, surely, Miss Taylor," said Maitland.

"Then pick it up and turn it upside down."

The tutor did so, and to our amazement it became a living thing, and hopped off his hand! When I saw it again on the ground it was apparently a leaf again. There were, doubtless, genuine leaves amongst them, but none of us could have told which was which.

"Good!" cried Sir Donald. "But now I'm becoming Australian I want a billy of tea. Let's go ahead and look out for a camping-ground."

So this we did. We had some little excitement "double-banking"—duplicating the teams—at the crossing, the water being up to the axles, and then we left the track and, following the river up about half a mile, came out upon a beautiful green space untouched by other campers.

The waggons having been drawn up on open ground, the horses were unhitched, and soon the river for a mile or so up and down was cheers with the jingle and the tinkle of their bells ay they went in search of fodder. Our tents were pitched under the shadow of great leafy Leichhardt trees, and the sides looped up for coolness. Before many minutes had elapsed there was a blazing fire over which was slung a large camp kettle, while juicy steaks were grilling on the clean glowing charcoal—and, by the way, there is no silver grill in the world equal to the sweet wood ashes of a camp fire.

Our supply of fresh meat on the trip was to be very limited. It would not keep twenty-four hours on account of the heat. We had a store of dried or salted meats, hams, canned mutton

and beef, tongues, herring, salmon, lobsters, and sardines. We had even some canned vegetables. There were large tins of potatoes which looked like coarse rough oatmeal until boiling water was poured over them, when they would swell. With the addition of a little melted lard and proper seasoning, they were very palatable eating indeed, and a welcome addition to our meals. I noted on this trip how gradually we all acquired a partiality for vinegar and pickles. As a medical man, I knew it was wise Nature's voice demanding an antiscorbutic in the absence of fresh vegetables. Towards this end we carried lime-juice, and a very refreshing drink it made with the addition of a little sugar. Dried apples and apricots well cooked were always welcome. Syrups and jams, tinned butter and cheese, were amongst the luxuries. Curry was invaluable. Twice a week we had duff, a plum pudding made, of course, with the usual currants and raisins and lemon peel. Rice was a great standby. Tinned milk was used by some, and, indeed, it was interesting to note how certain foods we had hardly ever heard of or had despised in civilisation now assumed no little importance in our daily menu. Occasionally we had fresh food in the shape of freshwater crayfish, which were simply delicious, and many kinds of fish. Kangaroo tails were sometimes got, as well as various kinds of pigeons and quails. Now and again parrots were used to make a stew. Upon the whole we lived well.

Our life in the fresh air and the regular exercise made us as hungry as school-boys. We older ones began to experience a most remarkable change in our lives. It was as if the processes of Nature had been reversed, and that we were growing younger.

It was a park-like place in which we camped. The river here described a great curve, and the dense vegetation on its banks kept the horses from straying back or perhaps going down to drink at the deep pools, where they might tumble in or get snapped by an alligator. At night we could hear the peculiar tremulous bellow of those horrible creatures. We pitched the tent in a pretty spot for the womenfolk, and rigged our mosquito curtains at given points, with feet always pointing outwards from the camp, so that we might guard against surprise from the wild blacks. The teamsters and drivers formed a little camp of their own, for no matter how much one would have liked to make all hands on such a trip feel that, for the time being, we had largely to depend on one another socially, there are always some red revolutionaries who prefer to keep to themselves, resenting a show of sociability as patronage.

As we sat some little distance from the smouldering camp fire that night, more by force of custom than for any desire for its warmth, we again discussed the ever-fruitful topic of our mission. We were now beginning the last stage of our long journey, which we earnestly hoped might be consummated by the recovery of Smith from the wilderness which he seemed, for some mysterious reason or other, unable or unwilling to leave. Up to now, all had gone smoothly. But before another week had passed this happy state of things was destined to be rudely disturbed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ATTACK IN THE DARK.

WE had experienced a long, hard day's journey, and were all very tired when we halted at dusk. The only suitable camping-ground was studded with tall spire-like ant-hills, twelve or fifteen feet in height and several feet in girth. In the moonlight it seemed as if we had strayed into a vast cemetery crowded with tombstones. The effect was weird and uncanny to a degree.

We could not form our camp as usual, but pitched our mosquito nets in the form of a half-circle some fifty yards from the waggons. I was on the outside, and Sir Donald some few paces farther away on the left. Madge and Bailey's wife slept under the huge tarpaulin, converted into a species of tent, close to the largest waggon in the centre of the camp. The teamsters and black boys were camped on the other side some hundred yards away.

It was a warm night, and as I lay with the edges of the mosquito net tucked in under my blanket, and my revolver handy alongside, it was a long time before I could get to sleep. The strange mysterious voices of the wilderness claimed my unwilling attention. There was the mighty chorus of frogs from the pools in the river-bed in every conceivable note—from shrill piping trebles to trumpet-toned basses. Then from far away would come the weird muffled chant of the rarely seen mor-poke, reminding one of the distant bark of a watch-dog. Every now and again from the river arose the blood-curdling shriek of a species of heron, suggesting some human being in agony. Then came the shuddering croon of a 'possum from its hollow tree, and all sorts of other sad-voiced calls and echoes that set in with the night, from a seething animal and insect life, in a tropical forest.

I must have sunk into a fitful slumber, for, on awakening, I could see through the dim gauze of the net that that brilliant constellation, the

Southern Cross, had wheeled in the sky. The air had grown chilly, and there was a curious cessation of all sound. Disturbing as the myriad noises of the bush had been to me ere I slept, this unnatural silence was doubly so. Why had all the birds and beasts and insects suddenly sunk to rest? I fancied at first that one of the dogs must have barked and in doing so had awakened me and startled the bush life to silence. I strained my ears, but could not hear any movement in the camp. It was useless trying to look through the gauze of the mosquito net, so I raised my arm and lifted the edge near my head, putting my face to the opening. I had a clear view along the line of our mosquito nets, with the ant-hills rising behind them and—what was it that struck me as strange and out of place in the scene? For the moment I could not grasp it, and then I realised it, while a cold shiver of apprehension ran down my spine.

In and out among the ant-hills, some near the white of the mosquito nets and some right in the shadow of the waggons, were objects that looked like dead blackened tree-stumps. They had not been there when we made our camp, for the men had had to carry wood some distance for the camp fires. How, then, had they come there, and when? As I looked, my eyes straining, I saw the one standing out against the net next to mine lose the indistinct form of a tree-stump and change into that of a man.

They were blackfellows! While we slept they had crept upon us. They had killed the dogs—in a moment they would have every man covered with a spear, and the moment after the spears would be driven home and each one of us would be gasping out his life,

HE RAISED HIS RIFLE AND FIRED.

helpless to strike back. I had wakened just in time.

Heedless of what there was on the other side of my net, I gripped my revolver and brought the barrel up until I glanced along the sights at the warrior who stood over the next net, and whom I now saw stealthily raising a long heavy spear. It seemed to me he was giving the signal to the others, and that when his spear fell——

The thought was never finished. My finger pressed the trigger and the report of the shot rang through the silent camp as the black lurched forward and came down all of a heap. A blaze of light surrounded me—my mosquito net was on fire.

To that I owe my life. Behind me a blackfellow was standing, spear in hand, ready to

strike. The suddenness of the revolver shot startled him, but it was the burst of flame, which enveloped the dry inflammable net in a moment, that unnerved him. With a guttural exclamation he sprang back as I scrambled from under the scorching heat. I brought my revolver to bear upon him, but ere I could fire I heard a shot from the far end of the line of nets, and he fell where he stood with a bullet clean between his eyes. It was a magnificent shot, and in the excitement of the moment I remember wondering how Sir Donald could have got to the end of the line, for I did not think any one else could have made so fine a hit. But it was no time then to wonder.

From all sides came the hoarse cries of the savages, the shouts of the white men, and the crack of revolver shots. I heard Sir Donald giving sharp short words of command—and I remembered Madge. Springing forward, I dashed to the tarpaulin shelter where she and Mrs. Bailey were sleeping. In my haste I ran full tilt into a blackfellow flying in the opposite direction. With the wind knocked clean out of my lungs I staggered back—I saw the knobbed club of the savage whirl over me, and then a voice, strange and yet familiar, came from towards the tarpaulin.

MADGE SLASHED AT THE BLACK'S UPLIFTED HAND.

"Don't move, Doctor," the voice said, and at the same instant there was a flash against the shadow of the tarpaulin, and my enemy fell forward into my arms.

"Oh, well done!" I heard Madge exclaim.

When, after shaking myself free of the black's body, I reached the tarpaulin, I found Maitland there, slipping a cartridge into his rifle, while behind him was Madge, her eyes ablaze with excitement.

"There goes another!" she cried, as I came up. A black had burst from his cover and was running top speed for the bush. Maitland raised his rifle to his shoulder, took a momentary aim, and fired. The black dropped in his stride.

Was I asleep or awake, dreaming or in my sane senses? Maitland, the timid, diffident, nervous student, was the man we had hitherto known, but here was a fellow of altogether different make.

At that moment the General hurried up.

"Good practice, sir!" he exclaimed, clapping Maitland on the shoulder. "I had no idea you could shoot. Madge, dear, I was anxious about you, but you're in good hands, I see. You safe, too, Doctor? Good! Madge, you'd better get into your tent while we clear up the camp.

We've beaten those fellows off—Maitland here seems to have picked off the last pair. Where did you learn to let off a gun like that?" the old soldier inquired of the tutor.

"I shot for Oxford against Cambridge," said Maitland, in his mild way.

"Capital!" cried Sir Donald. "You'll get plenty more practice before we come to the end of this trip, I can see. Doctor, you might come with me and see how the men have got on. I'll leave you on guard here, Maitland."

We went over to where the men were camped. They had not come off so well as we had, though no one was seriously hurt. One or two had rather bad bruises where they had been hit with the nullah-nullahs, or clubs, of the natives, but there were no spear wounds. My revolver shot had evidently been fired at the exact moment to upset all the schemes of the blackfellows. At the men's camp the shooting had been terribly wild, for not one savage had been killed, though it was evident several had been struck. The horses had also escaped.

"A couple of you men had better come over with us to clean up the camp—the remainder can get ready to start as soon as it is daylight," the General was saying, when, from the direction of the camp we had just left, there came the sound of a shot. We swung round and saw, over the ant-hills, a series of flames leap up.

"They have fired the nets—they are on us again. Come on, men!" Sir Donald shouted, and we rushed might and main for the camp, where only Maitland, Madge, and Mrs. Bailey had been left.

I shall never forget the spectacle that met our eyes as we burst through the line of ant-hills and obtained a clear view of our camp. The blacks, watching us go away, had stealthily rallied under the shelter of the ant-hills. With a wholesome dread of our firearms they relied upon their natural cunning for revenge. They also had to carry off their comrades who had fallen, for blackfellows are for ever disgraced in their tribe who return from a fight without the bodies of their comrades who have been killed. A few, carrying smouldering fire-sticks, had crept round behind the mosquito nets and set each one alight, while spears were showered at Maitland and the tarpaulin under which Madge and Mrs. Bailey were sheltering. As the spears fell, small parties of warriors dashed forward to seize and carry off the slain. We came in full view of the camp just as the parties were lifting the bodies.

The glare from the burning nets lit up the scene, showing the blacks in all their weird, fantastic decoration of white clay daubs. In front of the tarpaulin, with spears sticking in the ground on all sides of him, stood Maitland, loading and firing his rifle with deadly effect. As we dashed forward with a cheer, the blacks started to bolt, some stopping to look back at us with startled eyes. But Maitland never turned his head. Had he done so he would have seen what we saw and what, for the moment, froze the blood in our hearts.

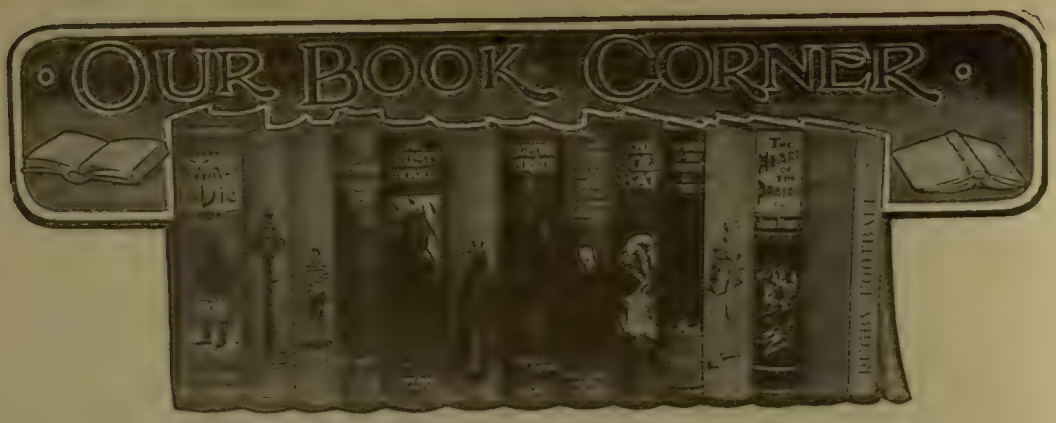
A huge warrior, over six feet in height and with a magnificent chest, had crept up under the shade of the tarpaulin. Silently he jumped out upon the unsuspecting Maitland just as the latter brought down a flying native. The impetus of his leap brought both to the ground with a crash. The rifle was jerked from the white man's hands, and, quick as thought, the black recovered himself and grasped Maitland by the shoulder. He carried a weapon of flattened wood, half boomerang, half sword, and we saw it whirl in the air with terrible speed as he aimed at the Oxonian's head.

At that moment Madge, darting from under the tarpaulin, slashed at the black's uplifted hand with the tomahawk that she held.

With a grunt of rage, the blackfellow flung down his weapon and sprang to his feet. Seizing Madge, he tossed her over his shoulder, so that she hung across his back like a blanket. Then he sped away with his burden.

We stood spell-bound. We could not shoot, for fear of hitting Madge; and we could not hope to outpace and overtake the black, who in spite of his load was running at an incredibly swift pace.

(*To be continued.*)



True Tales of Mountain Adventure.—By Mrs. Aubrey le Blond. (Fisher Unwin. 5*s*.)—Why so many people willingly risk their lives in the ascent of a mountain may seem somewhat of a mystery to cautious, matter-of-fact persons who are not possessed of what is commonly known as "a good head." Though the reward—a magnificent view from the summit—may be great, the penalty paid for a mistake on the part of the mountaineer is infinitely greater The reason for the popularity of mountaineering among those who have time and money to spend on it is, as Mrs. le Blond points out, that mountaineering is the manliest of sports, being carried out purely as a sport. It is a straight fight between Man and Nature, not between man and man, though naturally there is a certain amount of rivalry among good climbers to make a record. After three interesting chapters on mountaineering in general, glaciers, and avalanches, our authoress plunges boldly into her main theme, the thrilling and often fatal incidents which are written large on the page of Alpine records. We read of hairbreadth escapes and of terrible tragedies: of acts of gallantry and feats of hardihood. But as we turn over the pages we are carried into the serene heights, we get a feeling of spaciousness, and we begin to understand the charm which lures the mountaineer. Mrs. le Blond is careful that her book should have a moral, viz., that the true mountaineer is a thoroughly cautious person, and that for any member of a party to take needless risks is unpardonable, since any mishap to him may mean destruction to his companions. Wherefore the reader must not allow himself to conclude that the Alpinist is a reckless person. It has to be remembered that every year a huge number of ascents are made in which no accidents occur. The authoress, herself a climber of no mean order, has here presented to us a very well-selected series of episodes which will make her volume very acceptable to any one who, though no mountaineer himself, appreciates the pluck which necessarily accompanies an excursion into the regions of perpetual snow.

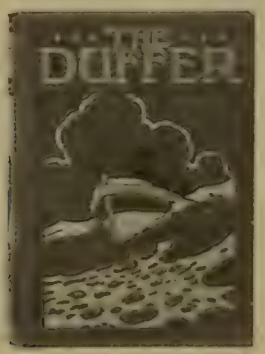
WALKING THROUGH DEEP SNOW.
From "True Tales of Mountain Adventure."

Jiu-Jitsu and other methods of Self-Defence.—By Percy Longhurst. (L. Upcott Gill. 1*s*.)—Time was when the Briton considered that what he didn't know about self-defence wasn't worth knowing. We refer here, of course, to the Briton who made a study of the noble art of keeping his end up in a rough-and-tumble. But his opinion has altered considerably since, six years ago, Mr. Barton Wright imported the scientific methods of self-protection that have for centuries been maturing among the Japanese. The immense

prestige accruing to this people from the sensational issue of the recent war has naturally enough made things Japanese the fashion; and Jiu-Jitsu has obtained the fuller recognition from British athletes on account of its being sound in practice as well as in theory. In his well-illustrated and lucidly written little book Mr. Percy Longhurst gives us a number of tips which, if studied and mastered, should make it uncommonly uncomfortable for any nocturnal Sykes or outdoor ruffian with whom the student may find himself at grips. "Make the first move, and be quick about it" is the moral underlying Jiu-Jitsu. Mr. Longhurst tells us just how to lead off in many different ways, any one of which is calculated to make hay of the adversary, provided that he isn't a Jiu-Jitsuite himself. Mr. Longhurst says in one place that Jiu-Jitsu is "eminently a science of self-defence, peculiarly suited for study by women." So that readers of both sexes will do well to lay out a shilling on this little treatise.

From "Jiu-Jitsu, and other Methods of Self-Defence."

The Duffer.—By R. S. Warren Bell. (T. Nelson and Sons, 5s.)—In a gorgeous volume of 484 pages, in which there are six coloured plates by J. Finnemore, our readers now have an opportunity of renewing their acquaintance with this story—with "The Duffer" himself, who made such a gallant effort to do work which was against the grain; with his little sister Joyce—possibly the most attractive character in the book—who used to write letters to God and post them in an old oak, whence her childish imagination pictured them being conveyed to Heaven by angel messengers; with the truculent Barry, law-student and sportsman, who after being snubbed in a manner which would quench most people would bounce up again with an elastic cheek that was apparently unsubduable; with the burly, frowning Black Jack, looming over the story like a thundercloud, and his little boy, who had formed the habit of repeating his mother's objurgatory remarks; with Rufus, the gallant mastiff; with Mr. Wall, the little organist, who, poverty-stricken as he was, out of the largeness of his heart used to give young George Denver lessons for nothing; with Mr. Lawson, the hypochondriacal brewer; Harold and Edmund Beresford, the two molly-coddles, and all the rest of the gallery of characters. The cover design of the book appears to have been inspired by Black Jack's one deed of self-sacrifice, when, instead of going to rob Mrs. Pardoe, the centenarian, he took the vacant place in the life-boat which was starting out for the terrible Bassett Rocks. The boat came back safe and sound. . . . "But out there in that wild tumult of waves one victim remained. The longshoreman, with his little boy's kiss as a last tender memory, had been swept away in the ocean's grim clutch. Ashore, there awaited him lifelong imprisonment: out there he found everlasting freedom."



The Romance of Early Exploration.—By Archibald Williams, F.R.G.S. (Seeley and Co., 5s.)—All the fiction ever written, from the immortal "Robinson Crusoe," to "King Solomon's Mines," cannot compare for surprising adventure, hairbreadth escape, marvellous surprise and dramatic moment, with the historical facts which make up the lives and doings of the world's wanderers. Think of the moment when the heroic Balboa for the first time in human history set eyes upon the mighty Pacific, of Columbus realising in a flash the dream of half a life-time, of Marco Polo welcomed at the Court of Kubla Khan, of Vasco da Gama rounding the Cape of Good Hope, and of Magellan fighting his way into the Pacific. In

TARTAR TRAVELLING TENTS.
From "The Romance of Early Exploration."

this twentieth century, when every ocean and sea is charted and sounded, and every tiny island speck and every shoal and sunken rock known, one is apt to forget that there was a time, not so very remote, when America had been discovered by the Vikings and forgotten again, when China was as unknown as the moon, and when no keel had ever ploughed the South Seas. To-day it is almost impossible to get away from the railway and the telegraph wire, and one could hardly lose one's self in the heart of the Sahara. But this book tells of great adventurers who disappeared into the unknown for years, and came back with stories that sounded incredible to their contemporaries, but which to-day we look upon as most commonplace. This book tells the story of the Chinese pilgrim Hwen Tsang; it tells how the Vikings discovered Iceland and Greenland and Labrador; it follows Marco Polo through the "barbaric East;" it accompanies the Friar Odoric into the mysterious region of Central Asia; it describes the endless wanderings of Ibn Batuta; the voyages of Prince Henry the Navigator, Columbus, Vasco da Gama and Magellan; it follows Gonzalo Pizarro into the grim forests of South America; it tells of our own Cabot and Willoughby, Jenkinson and Davis—and yet all that this excellent book recounts is true, although stranger than fiction. Readers of THE CAPTAIN should notice the fact that this volume is from the pen of Mr. Archibald Williams, who writes every month for their magazine, and if they want a thrilling book they should remind some kind friend that it will be a very acceptable Christmas present.

Loyal and True.—By Rev H. Escott-Inman. (F. Warne and Co., 3*s.* 6*d.*)—Most of our modern writers of school stories attempt, with some measure of success, to portray school life as it really is, but we cannot include Mr. Escott-Inman among their number. Anything more unreal and untrue to life than the story we have just read, it would be difficult to imagine. It is written in a pleasant, easy style, but has nothing further to commend it. The hero, Alec Urmford, is a prig of the first water, whose pleasure it is to pose as an injured martyr on every possible occasion, and the long arm of coincidence is stretched to breaking-point to provide him with opportunities for unmerited suffering. On the other hand, his cousin Claud Urmford and his friend Richard Disher are villains of the deepest dye in spite of their tender years. Apparently devoid of all moral sense, they hesitate at nothing—even the attempted murder of the little hunchbacked boy, Lord Cary, is but an incident in their daily life. Needless to say, Right, in the person of Alec Urmford, is eventually triumphant. He becomes, by remarkably rapid stages, head of the school and—a baronet. One of the villains dies confessing his virtues and the other repents in sackcloth and ashes. We fear that Mr. Escott-Inman has but slight acquaintance with the English schoolboy and English schools. The illustrations are curiously worthy of the book.

The Book of the V.C.—By A. L. Haydon. (Andrew Melrose, 3*s.* 6*d.*)—How, after the Crimean War, fifty years ago, our good Queen Victoria devised a symbol of the pride she took in her people's brave ones, and how nobly that symbol has since been won by countless heroes in every corner of the globe, this is the story told by Mr. A. L. Haydon in his stirring "Book of the V.C." It is truly an inspiring theme and one of breathless interest, for how many, though perhaps unrecognised, are the instances where the daring deeds of England's V.C.'s have been of the utmost importance to the Empire, and where, but for the prompt and valorous action of some of them, our country might not have occupied the proud position at the head of the nations which she holds to-day.

Such an instance is found in the story of the daring action of Lieut. John Bythesea, and Stoker William Johnstone, of H.M.S. *Arrogant*, who on their own initiative, one night during the Crimean War, surprised a Russian escort of five soldiers on the Island of Wardo, and, after a sharp fight, captured some despatches of the most vital importance, detailing extensive operations directed against the Allies' Baltic fleet and the army in the south. Well did these two heroes merit the Cross which was afterwards awarded them! Mr. Haydon

tells his stories in delightful fashion, leading his readers from country to country and from campaign to campaign with not a single break in the interest which he so ably sustains by his graphic and clear-cut narrative style. It is refreshing to note that he abstains from the use of bombastic superlatives, his language being of the simplest, but all the more is the heroism of his characters impressed on the reader's mind. The book is illustrated with ten spirited drawings by G. M. Payne and others. Its author hopes that it will become a standard work on the subject, and this is not at all unlikely. It is certainly the best of its kind that has been offered to the public for some time, and should find a place on every Britisher's book-shelf and in every school library.

The Complete Rugby Footballer.—By D. Gallaher and W. G. Stead. (Methuen and Co. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.)—The two famous "All Blacks" have chosen an opportune moment for the publishing of their most interesting book, which will doubtless be studied to their own great advantage by all followers of the Rugby Code. It is pleasing to note the prevailing tone of modesty throughout the book. The great achievements of last season occupy but little of the space, which is mainly devoted to the game itself, its history, its methods and interests in general. Now, for the first time, we learn how the great victories were achieved. The successful working of the scrum with seven forwards instead of eight was doubtless an important factor, and it is with great interest that we learn how this was done; but in our opinion the reason of success is to be found rather in the chapters which deal with the organisation of the game in New Zealand at the present time. The game is drilled into the elementary schoolboys as part of their education, for the player, to be first-rate, must begin as a youngster to acquire the necessary pluck and dash. The New Zealand Rugby Union is a real live institution which encourages and watches promising young players till they blossom, perchance, into full-blown Internationals. "Honest training is considered to be part of the season's regular work." How many English Club Secretaries could say this? Adequate organisation, honest training and an intelligent keenness appear to be the real secrets of the "All Blacks'" unparalleled success.

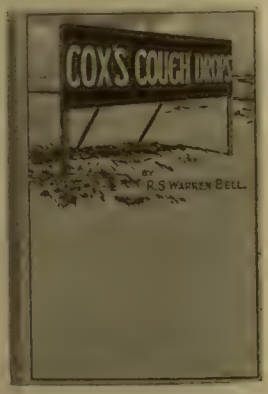
British Flowering Plants.—By W. F. Kirby, F.L.S., F.E.S. (Sidney Appleton. 5*s.*)—It is, perhaps, unfortunate for Mr. Kirby that his book challenges comparison with Mr. South's, noticed below; but it must be stated that in the multitude of books on wild flowers this cannot be put in any of the front ranks. Mr. Kirby is a well-known British Museum entomologist, and this is, we believe, his first excursion into botanical literature. The result is that, instead of devoting his space to his subject, he gives us eight or twelve lines of plant description and then sixteen or twenty-four lines about the insects that worry the plant. The 120 coloured plates are of an unmistakably "made in Germany" order, such as one hardly expected to see in a twentieth-century English book; and many of the species illustrated are not natives of Britain, though found on the Continent. The colouring is in the main of the lurid type, and not calculated to inspire enthusiasm for our native plants, nor to assist greatly in their identification.

Frank Brown, Sea Apprentice.—By Frank T. Bullen. (J. Nisbet and Co. Price 6*s.*)—A rattling good story, full of life and adventure, giving a picture of the working of a sailing-ship of the present day which could only come from the pen of a master of his subject. The call of the sea takes Frank Brown from his inland home and drops him, all fresh and green, in the deck-house of a "windjammer" on the point of sailing for southern seas. From this beginning, among squalor, sickness and ill-treatment, the gradual development of a lad of pluck and brains into a sturdy and proficient young officer is followed through many moving incidents in which figure tyrannical captains, brutal mates, mutineers and crimps, with officers and seamen true in due proportion. Frank steadily holds his own and picks up nautical knowledge, until times mend, and during his second voyage a glorious opportunity offers itself of which he makes the most, laying a firm foundation for a successful career. Events follow in an easy sequence throughout, giving an impression of reasonable probability. Indeed, in his preface Mr. Bullen claims that all the incidents recorded are founded on fact, and largely drawn from his own experience. Those who hold in memory the "Cruise of the Cachalot" will need little encouragement to follow the fortunes of this Sea Apprentice. This is a book to be thought of when presents are being selected.

Survivors' Tales of Great Events.—By Walter Wood. (Cassell and Co 3*s.* 6*d.*)—A capital idea has been well carried out, and the result gives excellent reading for boys and their seniors alike. The fifteen narratives here collected, and most efficiently edited, are all based upon interviews with actual participators in some of the most glorious and heroic struggles of recent years, and the personal note sounded in each account adds an interest which is often lacking in fuller records Victories and disasters by land are intermingled with terrible stories of conflict with storm and fire by sea, events, some of them, secure in their historical fame, such as the Charge of the Light Brigade or the defence of Rorke's Drift, while others are already almost forgotten, though famous enough in their day. Few of us but could afford to refresh our memory with the details of the burning of the *Sarah Sands* or the *Bombay*, or even of the disaster at Maiwand. Much of the material will be new to most readers, and some of it to all. The descriptions throughout are graphic and convincing, and constitute a high appreciation of the virtues of courage and discipline. The volume is prettily bound, and, contains a series of excellent illustrations, either original or reproductions of notable pictures.

The Butterflies of the British Isles.—By Richard South, F.E.S. (F. Warne and Co., 6*s.*)—"The author in preparing this volume has been largely guided by a recollection of the kind of information he sought when he was a beginner, now some forty odd years ago." Of course, he sought in vain, for up to a very few years ago such a volume was impossible, and there have been few naturalists so capable of producing it as Mr. South, well-known as the editor of *The Entomologist*. In addition to his reputation as a scientific authority, he remains an active field naturalist; and it is from that point of view that the book is written. The Captainite who delights to keep our Natural History Editor busy with queries will find here all that is known about our native butterflies, clearly set down and fully illustrated. Not only are the butterflies all minutely described in the winged condition, but the life-history of each is set forth from the egg, through the caterpillar and chrysalis stages to maturity; the food-plants, the localities for collecting and the principal variations are also described. But it is in the matter of illustrations, perhaps, that the book shows the most remarkable advance upon its predecessors; for nothing approaching them in fidelity has hitherto been done. There are sixty-four plates in colours—with a few exceptions direct photos from the insects—representing both sexes, upper and undersides, and the chief varieties. A similar number of black and white plates gives the life history of each species. In addition there are practical instructions in observing, collecting and preserving.

Cox's Cough-Drops.—By R. S. Warren Bell. (J. W. Arrowsmith. 3*s.* 6*d.*)—We are informed that this book, of which we have been favoured with an advance copy, will not be on sale until the first week in November. The enterprising Bristol publisher whose imprint appears on the title-page secured the story for publication before it had run half its course in THE CAPTAIN, and hopes that it will achieve the success that has attended so many of his publications. Those Captainites who found the entanglements of the tale a little bewildering to pick up from month to month will find that the story runs quite smoothly in book-form, and are advised to give it a second reading. The opinions as to the merits of the tale while it was appearing in serial form were diverse enough to make us await with no little interest the reception of the book by the general public A number of readers who hold "J. O. Jones" and "Jim Mortimer, Surgeon" in high esteem did not altogether appreciate a purely humorous work coming from the author of the same. We can understand this, as naturally they would have preferred something in the strenuous vein that characterises the works mentioned. On the other hand, by the older readers of THE CAPTAIN, "Cox's Cough-Drops" was much appreciated.



THAT the picture postcard enjoys an undiminished popularity is evident from the statistics issued by the Postmaster General. To take but a single town—Blackpool, the Mecca of pleasure-seeking Lancastrian operatives. From this place on last August Bank Holiday 150,000 cards were despatched, or about 30,000 more than on the corresponding holiday of last year. It has been calculated by some enterprising individual that the weekly quotum of cards passing through the Blackpool Post Office would, if placed one on the top of the other, make a column 417 ft. high.

In order to retain their hold on the public, publishers of picture postcards keep strenuously up to date in design and process. Though certain "lines" have fallen to a regrettably low level of so-called humour—an almost inevitable result of popularity—the majority of the postcards which we have examined lately show much care and taste in their reproduction. Peculiarly artistic are the "Surrey Scenes" coloured series of Messrs. C. Faulkner and Co., who also publish an admirable set of ship pictures. The Aristophot Co. has taken advantage of the *entente cordiale* to get out some very effective cards on which similar objects, British and French, are displayed

"L'ENTENTE CORDIALE."
Aristophot Co.

"A FAST SAIL."
Messrs. Geisen Bros. and Co

THE FLAG OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.
Aristophot Co

4.7 GUN PRACTICE.

THE VICTORIAN RIFLES.
Messrs. Max Ettlinger and Co.

DIVERS AT WORK.

A DUTCH IDYLL.
Messrs. J. Beagles and Co.

FROM THE "JOLLY JACK" SERIES.
Mr. F. Hartmann.

THE PLEASURES OF MOTORING.
Messrs. Geisen Bros. and Co.

side by side on their respective national ensigns. The Aristophot "Flag" series of the British Empire deserves equal praise.

Collectors who are especially interested in the army and navy should make a note of the fine sets issued by Messrs. Max Ettlinger and Co. We reproduce three examples of these. The "Ocean Pictures" and "London in Olden Days" sets for which the same firm is responsible are also effective.

We are glad to see that natural history subjects are now receiving due attention. Messrs. Giesen Bros. publish very good flower and bird series; Max Ettlinger and Co. "Wild Animals" (very fine pictures); and Messrs. R. Tuck and Co. contribute sets devoted to "British Fishes," and "Flowers in Vases." To the sportsman we recommend "Hunting Scenes," "Life of a Fox," "Hunting Dogs" (Ettlinger), and "British Game Birds" (R. Tuck), all admirably reproduced.

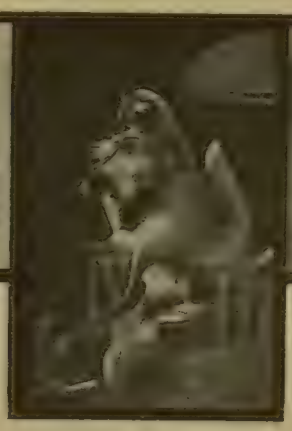
During an examination of the wares of Messrs. Beagles and Co., our attention was specially attracted by a British Cathedral set, a series of "Song" cards,—on each of which a verse of a well-known song is printed beneath a suitable illustration,—and a rather fascinating Dutch child action-story series. The last belongs to the humorous order—still a very prominent feature of the picture postcard. The comic aspect of the motor-car is photographically given in a series by Messrs. Giesen Bros.; the British Tar comes in for amusing treatment in a series (F. Hartmann) from the brush of Mr. Will Owen—illustrator of Mr. W. W. Jacobs' nautical yarns; and in

A TRANSFORMATION.
Messrs. Max Ettlinger and Co.

A LONDON, BRIGHTON AND SOUTH COAST EXPRESS.
Locomotive Publishing Co.

A PREHISTORIC STUDY BY FRED. BUCHANAN.
Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons, Ltd.

FROM A "FISH" SERIES.
Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons, Ltd.



LIFE OF A FOX.
Messrs. Max Ettlinger and Co.

FROM A "HUNTING DOGS" SERIES.
Messrs. Max Ettlinger and Co

"Prehistoric Studies" (R. Tuck) Mr. Fred. Buchanan takes a leaf out of the book of E. T. Reed and Lawson Wood.

The Locomotive Publishing Co. keeps well to the fore with its "Train" series, with which we may couple the "World's Expresses" set of Messrs. R. Tuck and Co. The latter firm, by the by, recognising the interest now taken in the Celestial Empire, gives us a series entitled, "Life in China," reproduced in colours direct from paintings. These show artistically the fisherman, brigand, and river pirate at work. Perhaps the most vigorous sketch of the lot is that entitled "Chunchuses on the war-path."

We have also received series of cards from the following publishers: Messrs. Howe, Vertigen and Co. (Child Studies, Winter Scenes, Sunsets, Inn Signs, Fruit Studies); Messrs. Blum and Degen (Houses of Parliament, British Fleet, Welsh Mountains, "Names," Garden of England); Messrs. Valentine and Sons, Ltd. (Magic, Famous Railway Engines, Flower Studies, Cat and Dog Studies, Christmas Tokens, Flags of the Nations); Messrs. A. Mason and Co. (Dutch Series, Stock Exchange Terms, Horse Studies, Killarney Series, Lakeland Series, Hunting Scenes, Dog Studies, Flower Studies, Farmyard Scenes); Messrs. E. T. W. Dennis and Sons, Ltd. (Child Studies); Messrs. Hood and Co., Ltd. (British Empire Series).

Without doubt the picture postcard is daily becoming more worthy of its title. Photographic views, monochrome or coloured, still hold their own in provincial shops as mementoes for the visitor to despatch to those at home; but in the large emporiums the revolving card-stand is a regular miniature art gallery. The great improvements effected in three-colour printing have toned down the garishness which a year or two ago characterised the coloured card. Several of the sets mentioned above would, if nicely framed, form really tasteful decorations for the drawing-room walls.

A HUNTING SCENE.
Messrs. Max Ettlinger and Co

"CHUNCHUSES ON THE WAR-PATH."

PHEASANTS.
Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons, Ltd.

Down the Pyrenees at a Hundred Miles an Hour.

A MOTOR-CAR ADVENTURE.

By SYDNEY H. BERRY.

Illustrated by A. PEARSE.

LAST summer, in company with Monsieur C. and his chauffeur, Louis, I had a fine chance of seeing "La Belle France" from end to end. For over two months we had motored from town to town, from the Channel to the Mediterranean, and when in the early part of September we found ourselves near the Spanish frontier, Monsieur decided to "jump the Pyrenees," and take a peep at the "land of the mantilla."

Now, as every one knows, the Pyrenees are not little ant-hills to be sneezed at; many of the highest peaks rise well over ten thousand feet, and this means some stiff climbing.

We had a grand machine of twenty-four horse-power, and Louis was pretty confident that she would skip across this mighty barrier. Some weeks previous we had tackled the Auvergnes, and our car had scaled the mountain roads splendidly. True, this would be a harder test, and for that very reason the opportunity was not to be missed.

One Tuesday, soon after noon, we left "Lourdes the Wonderful," threading our way among the thousands of pilgrims who come from all parts of the world to be cured of their ills at the sacred shrine. We wanted to reach Luchon before sunset, rest there the night, and cross the frontier the next morning. Between us and Luchon were two mighty ascents—the Col d'Espagne and the Col de Peyresoude. We could see the slopes of the former giant some fifteen miles before we reached the base. The Pyrenees are marvellously fertile, and they presented a beautiful appearance to the eye, clothed as they were at that season in their full verdure. But that was a view from a place of safety, and we were soon destined to modify our opinions somewhat.

The long climb up the steep slopes of the Col d'Espagne was wonderfully interesting, if somewhat slow. The ever-widening panorama spread out beneath reconciled us to our snail's pace. Fancy a machine capable of whizzing along at the rate of forty-five miles an hour, now ascending at barely a walking pace, and puffing away as if its very engines were at bursting-point.

Time passed much more quickly than we liked, and when we finally got on the down grade, heavy thunder clouds began to obscure the last rays of the sun.

Louis was on the alert, and no mistake. How his brakes creaked and groaned as he applied them again and again with all his strength! Once I drew his attention to an eagle hovering above us, but Monsieur immediately forbade all conversation; it was a case of "eyes in the boat."

Those mountain roads are beyond all praise; the smooth even surface would do credit to any of our parks. But how they twist and turn! We skimmed the edge of a precipice time after time; the fascination was so great that I think the danger was completely forgotten. For nearly two hours we descended on our brakes, and nothing went wrong until we had almost reached the plain beneath, when a terrible clattering forced Louis to bring the car to a standstill. This was no easy matter on that slope, but we blocked the front wheels with rocks. Then we noticed that the terrific heat generated by the friction of the brakes had fused the leather portion of one of them, and had practically put it out of service. After some trouble Louis detached it altogether, and taking our seats again we crawled to the small village of Arrean in the valley.

The weather was now very threatening. Rain was beginning to fall, and the light was fading. By our calculations we should have reached Luchon long before this, but we had under-estimated the distance. Monsieur had arranged to dine with some of his friends at Luchon that evening. The reputation of his machine was at stake; rain or fine, dark or light, he was determined to get to Luchon with the car at the earliest possible moment.

I went in search of the village blacksmith, and begged him to give us a hand with the brake. He was a Basque, and spoke a vile French, but he seemed a handy sort of fellow, and appeared to understand the case. After the best part of an hour's tinkering the brake was put in working order again, and the motor had had time to cool.

The smith seemed surprised at our intention of crossing the Col de Peyresoude that night. Did Messieurs know the route? he questioned, and when we confessed our ignorance he consoled us with the news that two fatal accidents had occurred between Arrean and Luchon only a few days before, in the great motor race for the Cup of the Pyrenees. "Far better stay the night at Arrean, and start with the daylight," he argued.

Monsieur was not to be tempted. To reach Luchon was a point of honour with him, and off we started in a drizzling rain which was fast converting the dust of the road into patches of treacherous grease.

We were not in the best of spirits. A dull leaden sky seemed to frown upon our obstinacy, and to quench what little ardour we had left.

It was a long, tiring struggle, that ascent of the Peyresoude. Those tortuous roads seemed never-ending, and as massive clouds rolled past, enveloping us in their clammy grasp, we almost fancied ourselves waging war against the storm king himself.

The cold, too, was intense as we mounted ever higher, and we drew our rugs around us, and cheered ourselves as best as we could with thoughts of the hotel comforts awaiting us at Luchon.

Our car behaved gallantly, although her motor was terribly heated. Louis was almost benumbed, and I could see that the strain was telling upon him, too. Poor fellow, it was no joke to have the responsibility of our lives upon his hands.

It was nearly midnight when we mastered the last incline (altitude 7500 feet), and now before us, or rather below us, was a twelve-mile drop to our destination.

We rested the machine for some ten minutes and compared notes. For my part I am not ashamed to confess that I would have given all I possessed to have been safe in Luchon, and failing that I should greatly have preferred "padding the hoof" down the precipitous passes. But an excited Frenchman will not listen to reason even when the chances are even against his car keeping her wheels or developing into a parachute.

The thunderstorm which had been rumbling around now seemed to focus its attention upon us. The rain hissed and plashed over the car as if anxious to give us a boisterous push off. Our wheels skidded fearfully,

I LEAPED INTO SPACE.

and involuntarily I clutched the arm of the carriage as a sudden lurch would send her to the side.

Louis was ghastly pale; every nerve in his body was strung to its highest tension. Above the din of the storm we could hear the whir-r-r-r-r of the brakes. It gave one a cold shudder to think that our lives depended on the continuance of that noise. We had to feel our way, for by an unhappy coincidence our head lamps would not give their accustomed glare.

Now and again a flash of lightning, like a warning angel, would reveal a sharp bend in our course. After one of these flashes Louis swung round the wheel with all his force, and we fairly trimmed the sides of a hideous black chasm.

For the first time in my life I was face to face with death, but I do not think I recognised it then. Something seemed to tell me that there was work for me ahead, and that this was only an experience; I remember that impression vividly to this day. Our car was gaining momentum every minute, and our pace was already alarming.

I did not take my eyes from Louis' face as I sought to read what was passing in his mind. Monsieur, who was now fully cognisant of our danger, bent over his chauffeur.

"Steady, Louis, steady!" he shouted.

Louis set his teeth, but did not answer. I tried to pierce the gloom ahead, but the darkness was impenetrable. I fancied I saw the road bend, but it took all manner of fantastic shapes in my mind.

"Slowly, do you hear!" half shrieked Monsieur into Louis' ear.

Louis made some movement, and instantly clatter, clatter, went a brake—gone, and only one left to hold us back!

"Stop! for heaven's sake, stop!" roared Monsieur, but he might as well have told the mountain to move. No longer retarded, the machine fairly rushed through the seething mud.

Louis lost his head completely, and loosed his grasp of the wheel. A boulder across our track almost upset us, and then I heard Monsieur shout "*Jump!*"

I reached the step, balanced myself as well as I could, and leaped into space. A second later I was stretched out on the road. I did not lose my senses, although my head felt wonderfully light, and I was conscious of a sharp pain down the left side of my body. I saw the car disappear in the night, and then wondered in a dreamy sort of way how my companions had fared.

Five minutes or more must have passed and I had no inclination to get on my feet, drenched as I was with the rain, which still beat a merciless tattoo.

I was roused from my stupor by Monsieur, who seemed overjoyed at finding me alive. He was holding his handkerchief, which was saturated with blood, to the back of his head, and I noticed, too, that he limped painfully.

"I landed on the side of the bank," he explained, "but, *parbleu*, my head came in contact with something pretty hard. Can you stand?"

He assisted me to rise. I felt rather dizzy, but I managed to walk, although at every step a dozen knives seemed to be stabbing at my left side. We stumbled along as best we could for two or three hundred yards, when a sound of violent sobbing arrested us.

There was Louis seated on the bank, his face buried in his hands, and weeping like a child.

We bombarded the poor fellow with questions—was he hurt?—how had he escaped?—where was the car?

It was difficult to connect his broken responses, but he appeared to have saved himself almost by a miracle. When he saw that to remain in the motor meant certain death, he, too, made ready to spring. At that instant a friendly tree branch, extended just over his head, seemed to point to a way of escape.

He jumped for it, and the car passed on tenantless. The branch snapped with his weight, and down he came into the road, bruising himself somewhat, but otherwise unhurt.

I will not describe that terrible tramp to Luchon; the memory of it haunts me yet. We staggered into our hotel more dead than alive, and almost too wretched to explain the situation.

A doctor's examination showed that two of my ribs had received exceptionally rough treatment, and the long walk had not benefited my condition. After a couple of days on my back, however, I was able to get about with my alpen-stock.

The car? The next morning a search-party found all that remained of our Mercédès. She lay on her side amidst a clump of trees which had prevented her from falling into untold depths below. Her motor and fore part were hopelessly smashed; she was, indeed, a sorry wreck.

Monsieur's dinner-party came off some time afterwards, and when his friends seemed disposed to tease him for missing his previous appointment, he drew their attention to the fact that few hosts rush to meet their guests at the rate of one hundred miles an hour, especially when a couple of mountain peaks have to be dealt with on the way.

COMPETITIONS FOR NOVEMBER.

Last day for sending in, November 19. (Foreign and Colonial Readers, January 18.)

NOTICE.—At the top of the first page the following particulars must be clearly written, thus:

Competition No. ——, Class ——, Name ——
Address ——, Age ——.

Letters to the Editor should not be sent with competitions.

We trust to your honour to send in unaided work.

Pages should be connected with paper-fasteners; not pins.

Write only on one side of the paper.

COUPONS.—In order to ensure that those who compete for our prizes are actual purchasers of the magazine, we require all competitors to affix to their competitions the coupons which will be found on an advertisement page. A coupon is provided for each competition. Please use paste, gum, or paper-fasteners for attaching these coupons to the paper.

You may send as many attempts for each competition as you like, but each attempt must be forwarded in a separately stamped envelope and bear a coupon.

Every prize-winner is requested to apply for his prize. Only those articles actually offered for competition will be awarded as prizes. Girls may, however, have tennis-racquets or hockey-sticks instead of footballs.

Address envelopes as follows: Competition No. ——, Class ——, THE CAPTAIN, 12 Burleigh Street, Strand, London, W.C.

All competitions should reach us by November 19.

The Results will be published in January.

AGE RULE: A Competitor may enter for (say) an age limit 21 competition, so long as he has not actually turned 22. The same rule applies to the other age limits.

In every case the decision of the Editor is final, and he cannot enter into correspondence with unsuccessful competitors.

No. 1.—***"Famous British Soldiers."***—On one of our advertisement pages you will find twelve pictures. Each picture is intended to represent the name of a famous British soldier. Write the name under each picture, fill in your name, age, class, and address, tear out the page, and post to us. Prizes: Three "J. P. Cup Tie" Footballs, by John Piggott, Ltd. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.
Class III. . . Age limit: Twelve.

No. 2.—***"Turn-about Competition."***—Send in the longest list you can discover of words of not less than four letters which make a word when reversed: *e.g.*, wolf = flow. Words to be arranged in two columns, like example given. Prizes: Two Handsome Postcard Albums. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 3.—***"Old Sayings in Verse."***—The other day we came across the following inscription on an earthenware jar:

There's a saying old and musty,
Yet it is ever new,
It's "never trouble trouble
Till trouble troubles you."

Send a verse of four, six, or eight lines built up round an adage of this kind. Prizes: Two "Swan" Fountain Pens. (See Prizes page.) The consolation prizes will be autographed copies of "Cox's Cough-Drops."

Class I. . . No Age limit.
Class II. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.

No. 4.—***"Picture Gallery Competition."***—Send a photograph or sketch (in pen, pencil, or colours) of a group of objects illustrating the title of one of the following: (A) A Picture, (B) A Book, (C) A Poem, or (D), a Play. Example: A football being kicked over a Rugby goal = "Crossing the Bar." Prizes: Two "Hobbies" Fretwork Outfits. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 5.—***"Non-repeat Competition."***—Compose a paragraph of one hundred words in which no word is used more than once. Prize: A "Bonheur" Watch, manufactured by Robert H. Ingersoll and Bro. (See Prizes page.)

One age limit . . Twenty-one.

No. 6.—***"Character from Handwriting."***—In the "Editorial" pages you will find reproduced the handwriting of a correspondent who has been good enough to criticise our methods rather severely. Our correspondent, after stating his objections to our character readings, calmly asks us to read *his* character. We leave this task to our competitors. For the best reading of character from the handwriting we reproduce we will present one of Messrs. Benetfink and Co.'s "Flash" Cameras. The consolation prizes will be autographed copies of "The Duffer." (See Prizes page.)

One age limit . . Twenty-one.

FOREIGN and COLONIAL READERS are invited to compete. In their case the time limit is extended to ***January*** 18, Australian readers being allowed ten days longer. By "Foreign and Colonial" we refer to readers living ***outside*** Europe. There will be ***no age limit.*** One prize of 5*s.* will be awarded to the sender of the best entry in each Competition. Envelopes should be marked: "Foreign and Colonial November Competitions."

Coupons must not be sent loose.

NOVEMBER CELEBRITIES.

By Readers of "The Captain."

"Edward the Peacemaker"—Sir Philip Sidney—Charles I.—Martin Luther—"Silver-tongued" Laurier—Oliver Goldsmith—William Pitt—Winston Churchill, M.P.

"God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King."

The words of the grand old National Anthem quoted above fittingly express the heartfelt wish of English-speaking people the world over, so thoroughly has King Edward by his wonderful urbanity, his tactfulness, and his eminently successful efforts in the maintenance of peace among all nations, endeared himself to the hearts of his fellow countrymen and women.

"Edward the Peacemaker," Born, Nov. 9, 1841.

If for no other reason than his work for peace, England's King will ever be honoured and loved by all classes, rich and poor alike.

It was a little more than two years after his accession to the throne—to be exact, in May 1903—that the King commenced his "peace mission," and spent the greater part of two months visiting Portugal, Italy, and France.

Everywhere he was received with the utmost enthusiasm, and the result of the tour diplomatically was of the greatest importance. In the case of our near neighbour, France, the visit had a far-reaching and lasting effect, and led to the *rapprochement* which has been so happily and beneficially concluded. His Majesty's efforts were universally applauded, and the proud title of "Edward the Peacemaker" was conferred upon him by public acclamation. During 1903 and 1904 return visits were paid by the foreign potentates whom King Edward had interviewed during his memorable journey, and the hearty reception accorded them by the English people did much to cement the good feeling between the nations brought about through the good offices of his Majesty. Never before probably in the history of the world has a better and more friendly feeling existed between England and France than at the present time, and the *entente cordiale* is only one of the triumphs achieved through the instrumentality of King Edward VII.

But apart from his success as a peacemaker, the King has, by his activity in carrying out the manifold duties pertaining to his high office, his sturdy British spirit, his love for our national

KING EDWARD THE SEVENTH AT THE AGE OF NINETEEN.
Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.
From an old print. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

sports, and his hearty good nature, earned the love, honour, and respect of all his subjects at home and abroad. REGINALD C. MERTON.

Sir Philip Sidney.

PHILIP SIDNEY was born on November 29, 1554, at his ancestral manor of Penshurst, in Kent. His mother was a very wise and prudent woman, so that it is not surprising to find that his childhood was a very happy one. When about ten he was sent to school at Shrewsbury, and, at the age of fourteen, he entered the University of Oxford. He finished his University studies when he was eighteen, and set out to travel through Europe. After three years he returned to England fitted in every respect to take his place in the service of his country. His accomplishments and elegant manners secured him the royal favour, and, although young, he was sent as an envoy to various foreign courts, where he acquitted himself very creditably.

At this period a great struggle was going on between Philip of Spain and his Protestant subjects in the Netherlands. Wishing to free themselves from the power of Rome, they rose in arms and called on Elizabeth as the head of Protestantism to deliver them. She responded to their call and sent an army under Sidney to their help.

Sidney's brief administration justified the confidence reposed in him, for the English army performed several brilliant deeds, the chief of which was the capture of Axel.

The Battle of Zutphen is famous in history only for the death of Sidney. While leading his soldiers to the charge the brave knight was mortally wounded by a bullet in the thigh. He was being carried away from the field when, thirsty from excess of bleeding, he called out for some water to drink. A bottle was handed to him, but just as he was going to drink he saw a poor dying soldier, who was being carried by, cast his eyes on the precious draught. Perceiving this, Sidney at once handed the bottle to the soldier with the words—words which will never be forgotten—"Thy necessity is yet greater than mine." Thus spake the conqueror of self, the true Christian knight.

Surgeons and physicians tried their best, but to no purpose. Deeply mourned by his queen and country, he was brought to England and buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

B. SMELLIE.

Charles I.

CHARLES I., King of Great Britain and Ireland from 1625 to 1649, was born at Dunfermline, November 19, 1600. He was the second son of James I. of England (VI. of Scotland), and in 1612 became, through the

CHARLES I.
From a painting. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

death of his elder brother Henry, heir-apparent to the throne, to which he succeeded in 1625. The nation greeted his accession with a burst of loyalty.

His early popularity, however, waned when it was seen that he retained in all positions of trust his father's unpopular favourite, Buckingham. When Charles summoned his first Parliament and asked for money to carry on a war with Spain, the Commons only granted a small amount, refusing more as long as Charles retained Buckingham for his chief adviser. He sent an unsuccessful expedition to Cadiz.

At the second Parliament Buckingham was impeached. Charles was angry, and dissolved Parliament before the trial was concluded. Not able to obtain money from Parliament, Charles ordered all persons with property to grant him money as a forced loan.

The third Parliament, before granting money, required Charles to agree to the Petition of Right, which provided that: (1) neither taxes nor forced loans should be levied without consent of Parliament; (2) no man should be detained in prison without first being tried by a judge; (3) marines or soldiers should not be billeted upon private persons; (4) no martial law to be executed.

A reaction in his favour, however, following the assassination of Buckingham, Charles dissolved this Parliament also.

The important dates to be remembered in Charles's reign are as follows: Petition of Right, 1628; Hampden's Ship-money case, 1637; the Long Parliament, 1640 to 1653; Strafford executed, 1641; Civil War, 1642 to 1651; Battle of Edgehill, 1642; Skirmish of Chalgrove Field, 1643; Battle of Newbury, 1643; Battle of Marston Moor, 1644; Battle of Naseby, 1645.

Charles was tried by a High Court of Justice appointed by the Rump Parliament. The trial, presided over by John Bradshaw, took place in Westminster Hall, and lasted from January 20 to 27, 1649. It resulted in the condemnation of Charles to death, and, in spite of protests from the Scots, either sincere or not, and foreign nations, he was beheaded on January 30, 1649.

Charles was personally a man of virtuous character, dignified, and adorned with a graceful culture, but politically an unscrupulous dissembler and intriguer.

FRANK THOMAS.

Martin Luther.

MARTIN LUTHER, the great religious reformer, was born at Eisleben on November 10, 1483. Hans Luther, his father, a miner in very humble circumstances, removed to Mansfield in 1484, and, after many years of persevering labour there, acquired a house and two furnaces, and in due time was appointed to a seat in the Council. At the age of fourteen Martin was sent to school at Magdeburg, whence he removed in 1498 to Eisenbach. At first he gained a livelihood by singing in the streets, but was soon taken under the care of a benevolent lady named Ursula Cotta.

MARTIN LUTHER.
From the painting by Cranach, in the Dresden Gallery.
Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

At school he made rapid progress in Latin and other studies, in 1501 he entered the University of Erfurt, and in 1503 received the degree of Master. In 1507 he was consecrated priest, and in the following year, by the influence of his patron, Staubitz, he was made professor of philosophy in the new University of Wittenberg. His profound learning, which embraced an intimate acquaintance with the ancient classics, the fathers of the Church, and the spirit of the Greek and Hebrew languages,

together with the fame of his eloquence, soon made Luther known to the principal scholars, and esteemed as a powerful advocate of the new light which was breaking upon the world. Great, therefore, was the attention excited by his ninety-five propositions given out on October 31, 1517.

These were condemned as heretical as soon as they appeared. He replied to his opponents with boldness and determination, and, since no one answered him, he appealed with justice from the decision of Cardinal Cajetan of Augsburg to the Pope, and from the Pope to a general council.

In 1520 Luther and his friends were excommunicated, and his writings were burnt at Rome, Cologne, and Louvain. Amidst these disputes and attacks, his plans for a total reformation in the Church, which was called for by the voice of the nation, were matured. The work of translating the Bible, which might well occupy a whole life, he completed, with some assistance from his friends, and thus rendered his name immortal.

He gave advice and assistance wherever it was needed, and interested himself in every indigent person who applied to him. In company he was always lively, and abounded in sallies of wit and good humour.

He was a good musician, and his excellent hymn-tunes are well known.

Few men, however, are equal to such excessive labour, and from the year 1531 to the time of his death he was a chronic invalid.

On February 18, 1546, he died at Eisleben at the age of sixty-three, and was buried in the castle church of Wittenberg. He left a wife, whom he dearly loved, and four children in straitened circumstances.

As long as he lived Luther was for peace, and he succeeded in maintaining it; and during his life the principle of the Reformation gained a firmer footing, and was more widely propagated by his unshaken faith and unwearied endeavours than by all the subsequent wars, treaties, and councils.

HENRY EVENNETT HAYLOCK.

"Silver-tongued" Laurier.

THE Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, G.C.M G., K.C., Premier of the Dominion of Canada and President of the Privy Council (to title him fully), was born at St. Lin on November 20, 1841. He was educated for the Bar, and when once started, rose rapidly both in his profession and in the estimation of those with whom he came in contact.

He embarked on his political career in 1871, when he was elected as a Liberal to a seat in the Quebec Provincial Assembly. From now on he took his place among those in the front rank of public good favour, and in 1874 he was elected to the Federal Assembly, where his great oratorical powers and his gentle, musical voice soon earned for him the title of "silver-tongued Laurier." He soon became one of the recognised leaders of the Liberal party; yet, on the other hand, both his high and unblemished personal character and his undoubted and easily recognised loyalty and attachment to the connection of the Dominion with Great Britain could not be denied even by his opponents, the Conservatives.

In 1891 he was chosen as *the* Leader of the Liberal party; and in 1897 his diplomatic tariff legislation, giving Great Britain the benefit of preferential trade with Canada, aroused enormous enthusiasm both in the Colony and at Home, and chiefly as a result of this he was given a tremendous ovation by the English public when he came to London to attend the Jubilee celebrations. On his return he was made a member of the Privy Council and a G.C.M.G. Later he endeared himself further to the public of the afore-mentioned countries by his prompt despatch of the Canadian contingents to aid the Mother-country in South Africa.

Sir Wilfrid is the first French-Canadian who has been Premier of Canada, and is, we are told, thoroughly French-Canadian in his sympathies, his speech, his manners, and his courtesy, but withal has an extremely pleasing personality, and is said also to "have the suave smiling courtesy of Mr. Balfour rather than the vigorous dogmatism of Mr. Chamberlain." His compatriots are enormously proud of him, and rightly so; so should all be who have the welfare of the Empire at heart of men who, like him, have "the iron hand beneath the velvet glove." These men, I say, have made our Empire *the* one on which the sun never sets.

HUGH MILLAR (Queensland, Australia).

Oliver Goldsmith.

ON November 29, 1728, Oliver Goldsmith, poet, historian, novelist, and essayist, was born, amidst humble surroundings, at Pallas, county Longford, Ireland. After receiving a meagre education at a hedge-school conducted by a scarred veteran, whose vivid descriptions of adventure and heroic deeds kindled the lively imagination of young Oliver, he was sent to a school at Elphin, residing, at the same time, at the

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.
From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery.

house of his uncle. Here his precocity was first discovered, and through the influence of his kind uncle he was sent to Trinity College, Dublin. Soon after he was transferred first to Edinburgh and then to Leyden University to study medicine, but at the latter place his fatal passion for gambling reduced his circumstances so much that he determined to make a pedestrian tour through Europe. With a German flute as his only baggage, he travelled through France, Germany, and Italy to Padua, where he took his doctor's degree—afterwards, again by the ever-ready help of his uncle, returning to these shores. After going from place to place, dissatisfied with any work which was given him, he took to literature. Besides contributing to the magazines, he wrote many poems, among which may be noted "The Traveller" and "The Deserted Village." For his great novel, "The Vicar of Wakefield." he received only £60. Nevertheless, he had his prosperous years, for do we not read of him buying house property in the Temple? But the strain and worry in which Goldsmith's habits of life involved him brought on a fever, which ended his chequered career when he was but forty-five.

Goldsmith, wild and wayward as he was, possessed, nevertheless, many good qualities. He was kind and generous, even to the extent of giving away his last guinea. His verse has all the characteristics for which Irish poetry is noted—simpleness of expression, quiet tenderness, mournful plaintiveness; his lines are easy and melodious and unmarred by the coarseness common to the writers of his time. And. when we think of the treasures, both in poetry and in prose, he has bequeathed us, we have no hesitation in pronouncing him one of the greatest of those who have made English literature what it is.

SWINBURN STEPHENSON CHERRY.

[Goldsmith owes much of his fame to the fact that he was the first writer of his era to write naturally. The prose of those days was stilted and pompous, and the "Vicar," with its simple, easy diction, came as a refreshing change which was duly appreciated by the public. Literary aspirants should take a leaf out of Goldsmith's book and write just as they feel and think, carefully refraining from modelling their style on that of any author of established repute.—O. F.]

William Pitt, Earl of Chatham.

IN the roll of statesmen that have helped to build up the great British Empire the name of Pitt stands out pre-eminent. Of the distinguished careers of father and son, that of the elder appeals most to the imagination by virtue of the extraordinary successes that attended our arms during his administration. Domestic politics

WILLIAM PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM.
From an engraving. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

interested him but little; his aim was to make the nation supreme in the councils of the world, and well he succeeded in his task. He made England "the umpire of the Continent, the mistress of the sea."

William Pitt was born in 1708, and entered Parliament as Member for Old Sarum in 1735. He first came into notice as an opponent of Walpole, and as an advocate of the war with Spain. His great debating power and commanding influence soon brought him to the front. He became Paymaster of the Forces in 1746, and though dismissed by the King his services were indispensable, and a coalition was formed, with Newcastle as nominal head but Pitt as real leader. Our foreign policy for the next four years was exceptionally successful, the year 1759 being the most glorious in the annals of British history. We were victorious at once in America, in India, and in Germany. Pitt became the popular idol, and men of all shades of opinion bowed to his will.

On the accession of George III., however, his position was soon rendered untenable, and he resigned in 1763. He was succeeded by Grenville and Rockingham, chiefly notorious for their treatment of the American colonists. On the fall of the latter, Pitt again formed an administration, and entered the House of Lords as Earl of Chatham. Almost immediately, however, his health gave way, and the ministry, becoming disorganised, resigned.

The American question monopolised the remainder of Chatham's life. He strenuously advocated a policy of reconciliation, but all his efforts were unavailing. In 1778, after an energetic speech in the House of Lords, he fell back into the arms of his friends, and shortly afterwards expired.

The great services he rendered the nation are best realised by fully comprehending the chaos that reigned after his removal. No man, before or since, has done more to raise our country to her present proud pinnacle of greatness.

W. F. Curtis.

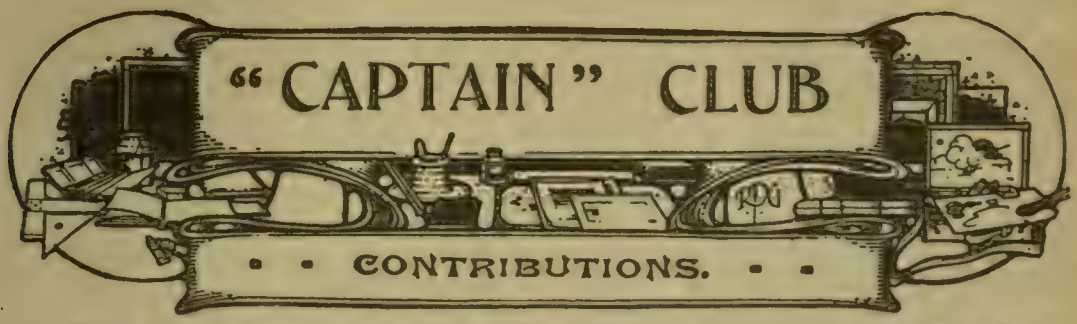
Winston Churchill, M.P.

Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill was born on November 30, 1874, being the eldest son of the late Lord Randolph Churchill and Jennie, daughter of the late Leonard Jerome of New York. Educated at Harrow, he proceeded to the Military Academy at Sandhurst, and entered the 4th Hussars in 1895. The same year saw him serving with the Spanish forces in Cuba, for which he was awarded the 1st Class (Spanish) Order of Military Merit. Two years later he saw Indian service with the 31st Punjab Infantry in the Malakand Field Force, and he was afterwards with Sir William Lockwood in the Tirah Expedition. For this service he was mentioned in despatches. In 1898 he was attached to the 21st Lancers with the Nile Expeditionary Force, and was present at the Battle of Khartoum. He also saw a good deal of service in the South African War. It was in the early days of this campaign that, whilst engaged in an heroic defence of an armoured train, he was captured and taken to Pretoria. The account of his historic escape from prison makes a thrilling story—how he watched the sentries for over an hour through a chink and, directly their backs were turned, made a bold dash for liberty—how, steering by the stars, he at last came to the Delagoa Bay Railway, and eventually, tramping along the line for five days and nights, reached Delagoa Bay. While at the front he acted as special correspondent for the *Morning Post*, and his vividly descriptive letters in that journal were widely read. On his return to England, Mr. Churchill entered the political arena, and was returned as junior member (Conservative) for Oldham. So constantly, however, did he find himself in disagreement with his party—particularly on the Fiscal question—that he eventually crossed over to the Opposition benches, and now occupies a prominent place among the Government as Under-Secretary for the Colonies.

As a politician Mr. Churchill is distinguished by the same qualities which have ever been prominent in his eventful life. As a speaker he is fluent, graceful, and forcible, and a brilliant future is predicted for him by those who ought to know.

It may be added that his "Life of Lord Randolph Churchill" is the standard work on that great politician. Mr. Churchill is, further, an "outdoor man," and plays a sound game of polo.

W. H. Gillman.



THIS part of the Magazine is set aside for Members of the CAPTAIN Club with literary and artistic aspirations. Articles, poems, &c., should be kept quite short. Drawings should be executed on stiff board in Indian ink. CAPTAIN Club contributions are occasionally used in other parts of the Magazine.

BOOKS by CAPTAIN authors are awarded to all the contributors to this month's "Captain Club" pages. Each contributor is requested to select a book.

The Olympian Games.

THE "Old Fag," commenting on the article by Mr. A. E. Johnson, says "The Greek runner would easily demonstrate his superiority (over our champions)." Truly the Old Fag does not often appear as *laudator temporis acti* without ample justification, but can he vindicate himself this time? The other side of the question has been presented by that true lover of classic Greece, the Rev. J. P. Mahaffy, in his "Rambles and Studies in Greece." His conclusions, so grateful to ourselves, may be summarised as follows.

One of the most important features of the Greek athletes' training was the compulsory eating of large quantities of meat, so much so that they were noted for their sleepiness and sluggishness in ordinary life. Both in quality and in quantity their meals were far heavier than those of ordinary men. Perhaps this "training" affords the real explanation of the historic death of Ladas.

It is difficult to compare their speed performances with those of modern times, but the soft sand over which the races took place must have been against the establishment of good record times.

Further, the Greek sculptors were marvellously accurate observers, yet only one vase represents a runner with his elbows back and his hands closed; all the others represent them rushing along in spread-eagle fashion, with their arms posed like the sails of a windmill. It is even said that they shouted as they ran Would such a style as this demonstrate any superiority?

Races were run, as Mr. Johnson says, in heats of four, but if there should be an odd man out he was allowed to run in the final without having undergone the previous fatigue of a heat.

The reasons for thinking their boxing much inferior to ours need not be given, but two other points may be noted. First, although nominally the reward of victory was a laurel wreath, and all "pot-hunting" was excluded, yet Mahaffy mentions that "solid rewards both of money and of privileges" were accorded the victors by their grateful country. And, further, there was an element of brutality in their contests

THE LATEST PORTRAIT OF MR. W. CLARK RUSSELL, THE FAMOUS WRITER OF SEA STORIES, WHO HAS NOT BEEN PHOTOGRAPHED FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.

Photo. Half-tones.

THE ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOOTBALL XI., WHICH LAST SEASON OBTAINED 104 GOALS AND HAD ONLY 4 SCORED AGAINST IT, WINNING EVERY GAME.

Photo. by W. Limb.

shocking to modern notions. Cheating was known then as much as it is now. The pankration was a most objectionable form of sport, often ending in one of the competitors being actually choked, or having his fingers and toes broken. It is easy to say we are not so sportsmanlike as the old Greeks, but who would nowadays regard the vanquished, even vanquished boys, as fit subjects for jibe and ridicule, so that they had to sneak home by lanes and backways?

Mahaffy sums up thus: "The general conclusion to which all these details lead us is this, that with all the care and with all the pomp expended on Greek athletic meetings, and despite the exaggerated fame attained by victors, the results physically seem to have been inferior to those of English athletes."

Surely the Old Fag has been caught napping! * G. S. D.

* [*It looks like it.*—O.F.]

Dress at Radley.

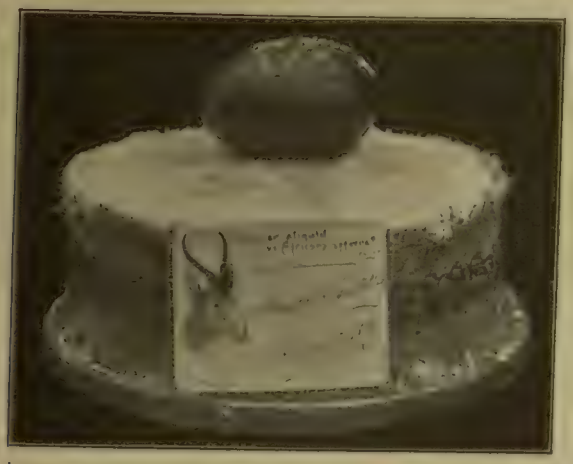
EVERY boy must wear "Eton collars" for his first year, after which, if he be in or above the "Remove Form," he may wear ordinary plain "stick-ups." The turnover or up-and-down collar may only be worn by Prefects and "First Caps" including all who have represented the School in any branch of sport. The above-favoured individuals are also privileged to wear grey flannel "bags," "Radley ties," "Social ties," scarfs, and brown boots. It is "side" to wear a buttonhole until one has been there for more than a year. Only black or blue ties are "legal," but hues of nondescript kinds are frequently worn, while only blue serge or black suits are permissible. In games "grey shorts" are *de rigueur* for all who are not "First Caps." The Football XI. wear "blue shorts," and other "First Caps" may wear "white." ALUMNUS RADLIENSIS.

Kent, Champions of All England, 1906.

WELL done, you Kentish men and Kent!
Let all the air with shouts and cheers be rent.
The Championship of England, we are proud to say,
Is yours, and won in a real plucky way.
Marsham, your Captain, has a team so good,
It's hard to pick from such a healthy brood.
Hutchings, the King of Batsmen, what fine scores he's made;
What boundaries hit, what "pretty cuts" he's played!
Fielder, too, the bowler of the season.
The Batsmen fear his balls, and with good reason.
Woolley, the Colt of Tonbridge town, has made a name,
And shown he's worthy of so grand a game—
And Blaker, with his "double figured" scores,
His splendid "sixers" and his numerous "fours."

A GOOD PHOTO. OF THE HIGH JUMP AT PORTORA (IRELAND) SCHOOL SPORTS.

Photo. by Ralph Mecredy.



THE CAKE PRESENTED TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN FOOTBALL TEAM, TO BE CUT WHEN THEY HAD WON THEIR FIRST MATCH.

The small Rugby ball on top was made of chocolate and contained the names of the donors.

Photo. Half-tones.

Blythe's bowling we must really not forget—
(The wickets fly and runs are hard to get.)
Burnup, how smart his fielding and his "throwing in;"
Seymour, his runs how useful for a "win"—
Mason, a batsman and a bowler too—
To all the four our heartfelt praise is due.
Humphreys and Huish, both are steady players,
When at the wicket, they are really "stayers"—
To one and all our grateful thanks we tend,
For Kent's fine season, and its glorious end!

JESSIE DURTNELL.

A Memory Tonic and other Matters.

WE all know that a good memory is priceless! There are many simple ways of stimulating the power of this attribute. By this I do not mean *aiding* it—a very different matter. To aid one's memory is to deprive the mind of its feeling of responsibility. It must not be allowed to relinquish this feeling; therefore eschew, so far as practicable, all such mental supports as the tying of string round the finger, the use of memorandum tablets, &c. Of course, there are occasions when it would be folly not to make a note, say, of some important figures; but this does not imply, by any means, the transference to paper of anything and everything to be remembered! Why, it may become by semi-unconscious habit only that one remembers one has made a note upon a certain subject at all!

My simple memory exercise is merely this: I keep a diary in which, every morning, I enter everything I have done during the preceding day, in short, concise language—for the sake of space and time expressing myself as briefly as ever possible. If, having tried it, you find this too easy, write up your diary once a week. Then you will have to think.

Apart from the mental benefit, there are other ways in which the keeping of a diary of this kind is a beneficial practice. It will necessitate periodical, retrospective thought—a fine thing, because most people find a field for their ruminations in the future: retrospective thought will bring them nearer to *the* time, the time for life and action, the present.

You say that looking forward encourages the delights of anticipation, and, what is more, induces ambition. I venture to reply that anticipation of future joys should take second

TWO MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN TEAM WRITING THEIR AUTOGRAPHS FOR YOUTHFUL "HUNTERS" AT RICHMOND.

Photo. Half-tones.

A PRIMITIVE IRISH STONE CHURCH: THE ORATORY OF GALLERUS, CO. KERRY.

Photo. by M. J. C. Simpson.

place to actual enjoyment of the present, and that ambitious thoughts applied to the future are thoughts only. Ambitious actions applied to the present are facts; and as we dream we are growing older.

If you reply that retrospection sometimes tides us over a distasteful present period, I say that there is a time for everything—even dreaming; but if we do not try to "work" the present we shall become, at best, theorists, which spells impracticability. Work in work-time, play in play-time, dream in dream-time; but you cannot play in work-time, or dream while you work. Concentration only can achieve success.

What has our diary got to do with all this? A great deal. At the conclusion of each day's entry, or each week's entry, criticise, in a word or two, the results achieved during that period. Occasionally turn right back to a preceding part of your biography, and ask yourself what you have done? then anticipate: what will you do? finally come to earth—and the present: *what are you doing?* What huge and complex branches of thought turn away from this subject; the fitness and inter-relation of all things, the association of ideas; expanding and sub-dividing ever, but always minute parts of that greatest subject of all—using the word in its widest sense—Life.

HERBERT SCOON.

[NOTE.—As I like to make this "Corner" as varied as possible, I have printed the above essay. It is well written, but for my own part I cannot agree with our essayist that it is a good thing for young people to keep a diary of the kind he mentions. It is unwise to indulge in retrospection and introspection, since such self-examination tends to make one morbid. Work hard and play hard, and in a general way try to improve as you go on. That is a good, simple programme to follow, and prying into oneself should form no part of it.—O.F.]

Indian Fairs.

INDIA from ancient times has been famous for its religious fairs, which are held in honour of some god or goddess. These often take place near the sources of the sacred rivers, and are attended by thousands of pilgrims from all parts of India, most of whom arrive foot-sore, weary, and half starved, so that it is no wonder cholera and other similar pestilences often break out, and carry off thousands in their train. All sorts and conditions of men are to be found here, from the mighty Rajah with his large retinue, to the humblest peasant and his wife, who after years of careful hoarding have at last accomplished the desire of their life.

At dawn thousands are seen wending their way to the river, in the fond hope that they will be cleansed from all sins by taking a plunge in the sacred waters. On every side is heard the sound of "Ram! Ram! Sita! Ram!" and the spectator soon gets weary of these monotonous shouts.

Further onward rises the lofty temple of the presiding deity, and every bather hastens there with the gift of a few copper coins and a cocoanut. The priests are there in full force, and partly by persuasion and partly by threats succeed in reaping a plentiful harvest. By evening all is over, the place is given up to silence and desolation, and both priests and people betake themselves to their distant homes.

B. SMELLIE.

OUR CHRISTMAS NUMBER
WILL CONTAIN AN ARTICLE BY
MR. DAVID DEVANT
(OF "MASKELYNE AND DEVANT")
ENTITLED
"SOME EFFECTIVE CONJURING TRICKS."

12 BURLEIGH STREET, STRAND, LONDON.

Do You Work too Hard?—Sir Oliver Lodge always seems to be saying something interesting. His latest pronouncement is to the effect that all of us who work ought to have more leisure—"more time for study, for thought, for recreation of all kinds—more time, in fact, to live." Taking the case of public-school boys, Sir Oliver said (I quote the *Daily Mail* report): "You get them up early in the morning, you work them before breakfast, and keep them hard at work and games until you send them to bed, dog-tired, in the hope that you have not given them time to get into mischief. Well, the plan fails, after all, to keep them out of mischief, but, on the contrary, seems to give them a disinclination for brain-work of any kind. I believe the system is a bad one." Now, I suppose that if I called a mass meeting of public school boys on Salisbury Plain, and put to it the question which begins this Editorial, the reply would be a deafening cry of "*Yes!*" Everybody would agree with Sir Oliver Lodge. Three—nay, six—cheers would be given for Sir Oliver, and he would be the "Hear! Hear-O!" of the hour. ("Basketville, my boy, you will oblige me by growling in a lower key.") Fortunately for Education and the Development of the Young Male Mind, however, boys have not the choosing of their own hours. They are chosen for them by wise and thoughtful gentlemen, beginning with Mr. Lyttelton, of Eton, and ending with the pedagogue—still extant, I am told—whose schoolroom is bounded on one side by a hedge and on the other by a ditch.

I Don't Think You Do.—In the main, I disagree with Sir Oliver. I have never yet come across a public or any other kind of school-boy who was over-worked. Where I live there is a little colony of boys who go to one of the great London public schools, and not one of them has ever appeared to me to be suffering from over-work. Now and again, perhaps, a boy knocks up through over-doing physical exercise when he is reading hard for an important examination—but that, of course, is no one's fault but his own. I was once drawn in a tennis tournament—doubles—with a youth of that ilk, and although we put up a good fight, we were just beaten. Had it not been for the fact that he had just been in for a scholarship, I might now be the proud possessor of a prize in the shape of a salad bowl or butter-dish. However, it doesn't matter. I have both. ("*He* hasn't, though!"—Basketville.)

So it would appear that there is nothing much wrong with the hours of the modern school-boy. Moreover, if he is worked hard during the term, he enjoys ample holidays—a month at Christmas, a fortnight or three weeks at Easter, and six or seven weeks in the summer. He might say that he could do with more, but the Old Folks at Home would disagree with him. As the champion of all boys, of high or low degree, I would like to add this: if you work a boy hard you must feed him well, just as you would a horse. And I have heard tales about the food doled out at certain public schools. Chicago is not the only place where the meat-supply might be improved upon. When I was a boy at school the meat was so bad that I sent my parents a specimen of it in a letter—a gruesome sort of thing to drop on to a breakfast table! Basketville was at a public school before I secured him, and he tells me that, though his former place was

satisfactory in many respects, he could not put up with the quality of his meals. "I was sorry to leave," added Basketville, "because I always got on well with the young gentlemen. But the bones, sir—the bones were not worth cracking." The moral is, that if you want to keep boys up to concert pitch in their work, you must give them bones worth cracking.

No; I do not think that the hours are too long at public schools. Plenty of attention is paid to the general well-being of the modern boy, and headmasters are not slave-drivers. They want their schools to score well in examinations, but they don't want their boys to go home looking pale and fagged. And another thing: Sir Oliver is supposing, of course, that when a boy is shut up from nine till twelve (with a brief breathing spell) he is working all the time. My experience, first as a school-boy and afterwards (for four years) as a school-master, leads me to state that the average poor over-worked lad seizes every opportunity that offers to snatch a little rest. Therefore Sir Oliver Lodge may feel reassured. Even when a boy is working at high pressure all the term, he gets plenty of time in the holidays "for recreation of all kinds—in fact, to live." The people who work too hard are not the boys. It is the family man of middle age who finds the job of getting a living a rather too strenuous thing, and who, in addition to all his other troubles, has an infamous income tax to pay. It is the father, not the boy, who is in need of Sir Oliver's sympathy.

A Suggestion.—It would not be a bad thing, I think, if there were more *whole* holidays. The ordinary vacations might be shorn of a day or two to allow of them. It is a good thing for everybody occasionally to do absolutely no work from the hour of rising to bed-time—to get right away from one's ordinary vocation and surroundings—to luxuriate in idleness. In the case of boys a change of occupation is necessary, for idleness is never a good thing for young people at any time. So, given your whole holiday, why not get provisions and set off for a long day's tramp? Let the day be an entire change. Do not play games, but get out of your usual environment and breathe different air. The thing

THE OLD 'UN: "That's right, I like to see little boys bow to their elders."
THE YOUNG 'UN: "It isn't that—it's apples."

is to get out of the groove of everyday existence—to get a good change.

"Boys": By Girls. The same excellent daily paper from which I have already quoted, gives samples of opinions expressed by girls in essays on boykind. The girls are scholars at St. Anne's Day School, Soho. There is a good deal of solid truth in their remarks. For instance:

"Some boys," says Frances Benneyworth, "are very nasty to their sisters indoors, but if anybody says anything against them, they stand up for their sisters."

But boys' mischievous tendencies are condemned. "Boys like letting off fireworks behind people's backs, when walking or talking, and in this they take a great delight," says Rose King, and Bessie Stockley seems to have suffered personally: "Some boys are very tormenting. They pull the girls' hair until they get a bad headache, and then they sometimes say they didn't mean to do it."

Politeness is commended. "Some boys," says Cissie Burton, "are very polite, and raise their caps when they meet you in the street while others will pass by without looking. A boy should be taught good manners, as they show so much in a boy, and make him a 'little gentleman.'"

"A boy," wrote Madge Robbins, "has a better chance of being educated than a girl, because boys attend school regularly, but a girl often has to stop at home and mind the baby. I should pity the poor baby if a boy had to mind him." "While girls are useful in some ways, we could never do without boys," says Florence Rolla. "They are our protectors, our helpers, and sometimes are better comforters than girls."

Under "Answers to Correspondents" you carefully print a semi apology for not replying to all questions on account of the amount of letters and want of space.— You say you only reply to those questions which are of sufficient ~~interest~~ general interest.— Now I ask you how on earth you expect anyone, except the party compromised to feel any interest in the fact that "Bristles" will "do" his aunt out of a 5/- tip next year: or that he is fair haired. That Joe is full of energy! I dont particularly want to know that "Bristles" wears puce breeches: Constance may be late every day for breakfast for all anyone else cares.— Mr. Button's bad writing need not be advertised in public! Are Pots cardboard perpetrations of such general interest?

This correspondent, whom we will call "Critic," after subjecting us to the above rebuke, requests us to tell *his* character by his handwriting. This task we leave to our readers, who will find particulars among "Competitions for November."

Employment Bureau.—It is my intention in future to set aside an advertisement page for the benefit of readers who wish to obtain posts or further their own interests in other ways. The charge for such advertisements will be ONE PENNY PER WORD, and we shall not accept advertisements which are under twelve words in length. Such advertisers as do not care to have their addresses published will be given a number, and the answers to their advertisements will be sent on to them from this office. We cannot, however, undertake to forward letters to foreign countries. I give below examples of the kind of advertisements we invite for our "Employment Bureau":

Public-school boy, age eighteen, requires post in land agent's office. Would pay small premium. Strong and healthy, and can ride.—A1, CAPTAIN Office.

Clergyman's son, age twenty, requires mastership in French school. One year's experience in England. Tall; good at games.—A2, CAPTAIN Office.

L. R. will be glad to supply cut flowers by return of post. Terms on application.—Address: The Willows, Upton St. Leger.

S. L. E., a cripple, undertakes the restringing of tennis racquets. Terms on application.—A3, CAPTAIN Office.

'Varsity Man requires holiday tutorship for four weeks from Dec. 20. Games; music; motorist.—Parke, 11 The Parade, Leominster.

We make no charge for the address or office number. A stamp must be enclosed for

replies to be forwarded, and any inquiries with regard to the "Bureau" must be accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope. The "Bureau" is intended absolutely for amateurs, and no tradesmen's advertisements will be accepted under any consideration.

A Letter from Japan.—The letter quoted below is forwarded to us by H. Mills Whittle, one of our readers. Although there are some quaint mistakes, the English is really wonderfully well done, and the letter is a most creditable production on the part of a Japanese medical student who has never been to this country.

"I am much obliged to you for your letter and picture cards. I send you five cards and hope you will be pleased with those. I have been very much interested in your country views and the Great Midland Station. I don't want cost for cards, please give me some of your cards. Will you kindly tell me your occupation. I am a student of Kanagawa Medical Academy at Kanagawa, Ishikawaken. I am learning pharmacy and German as foreign language in our school, therefore, I write hardly English. I am afraid that you can not understand my letter, because my sentence is full of broken. Many thanks to your nation for earnest welcome to our blue-jackets. General Rowel and your Highness Cannot* had been welcomed flourishing with our hearty in Our country. I believe England is a great respecting land in the world for her nation's great virtue, and hope the alliance with such a noble land becomes firm more and more."

"Best Twelve Stories in Volume XV."—This competition resulted as follows. The tales are placed in order according to the votes each received:

(1) Dash and Dot.
(2) The Making of a Man.
(3) "At All Costs."
(4) The Barton Cup.
(5) The Mystery of the *Emily Grimes*.
(6) The Fate of the *Susanna*.
(7) How Sparkes Negotiated a Loan.
(8) The Mouth of the Cavern.
(9) Portland Pirates.
(10) Boyle and Doyle.
(11) An Act of Grace.
(12) The Triumph of Peace.

A suitably inscribed volume has been sent to Mr. Charles Whitlock, whose ingenious and exciting story, "Dash and Dot," heads the list.

"Parliament" writes:—"In the October 'Editorial,' replying to 'Joe,' you state that if he goes to the lobby of the House of Commons and sends in his card to the member for his division, his member will come out and pass him into the Strangers' Gallery. That used to be the case, but it is now arranged on a different system. Each member is allowed a certain number of passes for the Strangers' Gallery (I am not certain of the number), which he has to sign, and which have to be filled up with the name and address of the person attending; so unless 'Joe's' member had one of these passes with him, or was able to get one from some other member, I am afraid 'Joe' would be unable to get in. Your correspondent's best plan would be to write to his member and ask him to let him have a pass for whatever date he requires it, if he has any particular fancy.

"If they do not use all their passes, members hand them to their respective whips' office, where they are disposed of to persons who perhaps do not know a member, or who through other circumstances have not been able to get a pass. If 'Joe' cannot approach a member direct, no doubt his local Conservative or Radical Association could get him a pass."

* Prince Arthur of Connaught.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

[As we receive a great number of letters, our correspondents are requested to bear in mind that we can only comment on communications that we consider to be of general interest. Readers requiring information quickly should enclose stamped envelopes or post-cards, according to the length of the answer they desire.]

How to Enlarge the Army.—"I wish to try and show in your pages" (writes "G. S.") "that conscription would not be the only way of enlarging the Army. There is, I feel certain, a large section of British youth that has an ardent desire to render service to their country, but which is prevented from so doing by what seems to have but little to do with the boy's capabilities. I do not refer, of course, to the steady worker who finds it impossible to pass his required examinations. If he does not try, he does not deserve to pass; whereas, if he does try and cannot pass, 'tis sad but true, he must not hope for an Army commission. But what I do refer to is the keen, hard-working, and, more than likely, clever boy who is unable to pay for an education. Being of this class, and belonging to my school volunteers, my feeling is all the more intense. Could *nothing* be done to gain a position for a boy who has an instinct for such affairs but is unable to pay for his education at Woolwich or Sandhurst? *Surely* he is more deserving than the very rich and fairly clever youth who joins at the wish of his warrior father!"

Motor-car Falling.—With reference to this matter, broached in the September "Athletic Corner" by Ernest E. Ette, "Vibos" says he was once travelling at the rate of about twenty miles an hour in a motor-car when the driver took a sharp turn to the left and the car fell on its left side—that is, on the inside. This accident happened in India, where, says "Vibos," there is no speed limit. I heartily wish that 90 per cent. of British motorists would promptly go to India. Motoring has altogether altered the character of life in the

country. One cannot jog along quietly on one's bike or in a pony-cart without being in a constant state of apprehension from rapidly travelling motor-cars, especially when the road is slippery. Things would be improved if motorists were compelled to keep to certain roads. Then one could take a house in a quiet part of the country well away from those roads, and drive and cycle about in comfort.

L. H.—A very nice letter. Do not be discouraged from trying your very hardest when going in for our competitions. Dr. Johnson once said that anybody could write a book if he went about it doggedly enough, and I suppose the same dictum applies to winning competitions. At the same time, I hesitate a little about encouraging people to write, as there is no doubt that there are far too many people writing nowadays. So many forget that to write a story one must have a gift for it, and must, in addition, acquire the necessary technique. There is a way in which a story ought to be written, just as there is a way in which a house ought to be built. An architect's apprentice cannot design a building until he has gone through a long course of training, and similarly a would-be author cannot write a story until he has learnt the art of putting a story together. What that art is must be left to his native wit to discover.

G. C. McG. is a sensible Scottish laddie. (By the way, is a fellow of nineteen a "laddie" in Scotland? I hope so; one can only be a laddie once, and it is a mistake to try to be a man too soon.) George's criticism of our late serials is a very reasonable one, and his ideas with regard to girls are sound. "I prefer a girl who, while not going in overmuch for athletics herself, can take an intelligent interest in them," says he. Well, as "The Informer" progresses, he will find Yolande Thorne just that sort of girl. And here I may mention that the first chapter of the December instalment contains the best description of a public school cricket match at Lord's that I have ever read. I should like to see a short essay from George on his favourite book—not describing it, but saying *why* it is his favourite.

"Redhead."—As you seem to be so uncertain about a profession, you had better let the matter wait until you are sixteen, and meanwhile go on improving yourself in general knowledge. I don't think a fellow ought to specialise in his studies until he is sixteen, because it is advisable that everybody should have a good all-round education. Specialising means that a lot of things go unlearnt that ought to be learnt. Thirteen is a very early age at which to choose a profession, I may tell you. Electrical engineering is a splendid calling, but it is also a trying one, and if you are not strong enough to be a doctor I fear you would not be strong enough for that—but time will show.

Ruingarangi (N.Z.).—I am always sorry to hear of girls running after boys, and making appointments with boys unbeknown to their parents, who have a right to know what friends their sons and daughters have and should never be kept in the dark. Naturally, boys like the society of girls, and girls that of boys, but everything should be open and above-board. Moreover, girls should always endeavour to exact respect from boys, and by conduct such as you describe they forfeit it. I think you have behaved very properly, and I hope you will always act in a way that will cause your sex to be held in honour and esteem by the opposite one.

"Matelot."—(1) I fear you would find it most expensive to buy a perfect model of a battleship. The models of liners in the windows of the big London shipping offices are worth hundreds of pounds. The only place at which you could see a model of a battleship would be at the headquarters of a great firm like Armstrong, Whitworth and Co., of Newcastle. (2) Certainly it was an excep

A PREHISTORIC "DREADNOUGHT."

Reproduced by courtesy of *The Blucjacket*

tional experience to come across a perfectly white cat with one green eye and one blue one. I have occasionally met gentlemen with one eye of a perfectly normal colour and the other of a darker hue, but I have never met a cat similarly distinguished.

W. A. T. is lame, and on that account takes a sympathetic interest in "Firmin," who tells the tale of "The Informer." W. A. T. thinks it was rather heartless of Firmin's comrades to call him "Toothpick," as such a name naturally drew attention to his infirmity. I do not share W. A. T.'s view of this matter. Boys always give nicknames, and Firmin's nickname shows him to have been popular with his schoolfellows, as a nickname of that sort would never be given to a fellow who was not popular. I must refer W. A. T. and other readers to my answer to "Kim" last month for information regarding THE CAPTAIN Club.

J. E. M. W.—Certainly there are many intelligent women who might safely be entrusted with a vote, but one cannot particularise in these matters and give a vote to one woman and not to another. As you say, there are many women who would vote far more intelligently than the average working man, but, after all, men have the prior claim to a vote, for it is they who earn the money and keep the home going. And you must remember that it is always in the power of women to influence voting, if they understand politics.

"Anxious."—I have never heard that belts weaken the back, but I believe the best things to wear are easy braces, except of course when you are taking exercise. As you find your belt comfortable, by all means go on wearing it. You must be careful how you leave off a belt, as if you leave it off when the weather is at all cold you may catch a cold in that part where its pressure has been. The same remark applies to leaving off braces.

"Puella."—I should have thought that your friends could advise you about a course of reading. Try a course of Charles Kingsley and Whyte Melville. "Westward Ho!" by the former and "The Gladiators" by the latter are splendid books. Read also the works of Charlotte Brontë, and the less sensational books by Mrs. Henry Wood, such as "Roland Yorke" and "The Channings." Then, of course, you ought to read all of Scott's novels, all of Dickens', and all of Thackeray's.

S. G. M.—What! *More* character by handwriting! Do I hazard my guesses or have I a principle? Nearly all guess-work, my dear. For instance, I guess you are fond of needlework and don't play hockey. Don't you think that the boys who read THE CAPTAIN are very good-tempered not to mind my putting in replies to so many girls? But what am I to do? You write such appealing letters that I can't find it in my heart to ignore you.

C. Osborne.—Come, young fellow, you will not do very much in the world if you expect me to supply you with brains. What on earth do you think fellows do when they get up social clubs? At your Captain Club you would play games, chat, debate, organise walks and entertainments, and have a thoroughly jolly time. I should say your writing would be suitable for the Accountant's Branch, Royal Navy.

"Wanderer."—Washing the wrists has a cooling effect on the body, because of the veins coming near the surface there. The wrists are a more susceptible part of the anatomy than you may think. Cross-country runners sometimes have to stop owing to the chilled condition of their wrists, and some on this account always wear mittens. But a boy ought not to be bothering his head about such things.

P. T. Salvesen.—Boys and girls ought not to spend too much time writing poems and stories. School-time is the period for general cultivation of the mind, and too much scribbling makes the mind travel too much in one groove. You are quite right to burn your poems. If you take my advice you won't write any more until you are old enough to understand what poetry is and how it ought to be written.

Eileen is a waggess, for after her signature she writes in brackets, "on no support." There is so much character in her handwriting that I am diffident about tackling it. However, here goes: Roguish, smart, generous, and dresses a good deal in brown. Cycles, talks a lot, and has read nearly everything written by Merriman. Rather fond of teasing young men. ["Oh, go hon!"—BASK.]

"A Constant Reader."—You are very straightforward and fond of games. You wear your hair well brushed back from the forehead and scorn curls. I do not think you are particularly heavy. Nor are you notable for your originality, for your *nom-de-plume* has been used by correspondents more than any other. At the same time, please continue to live up to it.

"Three Years' Subscriber," referring to the story by Mr. Wodehouse entitled "A Division of Spoil," published in our September issue, says that if a book of 516 pages was divided among a class of 32 boys, each boy would get 16½ pages, and not 13, as the author had it. Quite right, T. Y. S. You may go up above Mr. Wodehouse.

"Captain" Prize-winners.—W. H. Palethorpe has industriously discovered that in vol. xv. England won 62 prizes, Scotland 6, Ireland 5, Wales 4, and the Channel Islands 1. As regards Consolation Prizes, England won 58, Scotland 5, Ireland 2, Wales 0, and the Channel Islands 2.

"Timon."—You are good at getting up in the morning, and you bustle off to school with a fresh, cheery face. You work hard and are a favourite with your form-master. You have a pet of some kind, but I cannot quite determine what it is. From the way you write your "b"s I should say it is a bunny.

S. R. W.—Send your full name and address, and I will put a notice in THE CAPTAIN saying that you would like to hear from other readers in Peckham. Meanwhile, let each of the present members introduce two friends. Then meet at the house of one of you, and discuss plans. Send a stamped envelope if you want any more advice.

W. D. and **F. M.**—Write a letter to the Principal of your school suggesting a change of hat-band, and get a hundred other girls to sign it. The boys at Charlton Court wore a jolly hat-band—look up "Cox's Cough-Drops" and see what it was. Both very sensible young people, I should say. W. D. is the more practical, and F. M. the livelier.

"A Serious Suggestion."—I have received a number of communications commenting on "Balbus's" suggestion. The majority of my correspondents agree that the Corner proposed by "Balbus" would not be welcome, especially under the title of "The Christian's Corner." I will bear this matter in mind, and may refer to it again later on.

"M.P."—You will find a full list of the Cabinet in *Whitaker's Almanack*. You are very precise, conscientious, punctual, and obedient. You are a cyclist, and the nickel-plating on your machine is always kept spotless. You save up your money and have got greyish-blue eyes.

"Paulinus," sends a peculiar "howler" given in reply to the question, "What is a theorem?": "Theorem comes from the Greek word θεός, meaning God, and the Latin *res* (*rem*), a thing. It is a thing which can only be done by a god and is impossible for a mortal."

"Tales of Stowaways."—Owing to the author of this series having gone abroad, some delay must occur before I receive the remainder of the tales. No. II. will probably appear in our January number.

"Unus."—I wish you and other Captainites would understand that we do not care to publish a photograph unless it has some special interest attached to it. A photo. of German emigrants on a liner is not of any particular interest.

Gladys von S.—"The Cub in Love" can be obtained from the De La More Press, Hanover Square, W., price 1*s.* 6*d.* "Love the Laggard" is out of print. I have read your letter with much pleasure.

"Ethel."—Don't bother about your height. According to the law of averages, what you lack in inches is made up to you in some other way. People on the short side generally have much more energy than tall people, for instance.

A. S. W.—Tennis balls will not keep in this climate during the winter. The medical profession is not more overcrowded than any other profession, and there is always room in it for a good man who is prepared to work hard.

Ball in Pad.—Several correspondents point out that a ball lodging in the pad (or any other part of the clothing) is considered dead. At the time of the Grace episode this rule had not been made.

Joseph.—You should make your drawing about twice the size of the reproduction. Having executed your design, you send it to the Art Editor of a periodical and leave him to do the rest.

A. E. D.—I am sorry, but it is only in very exceptional circumstances that we print photos. of football teams.

Hugh Gill.—Readers who asked to be "clubbed" are clubbed. We do not waste type and space in telling each applicant that he has been clubbed.

C. S. Smith.—I am afraid that the picture you send us of the castle is too small. Your essay is well written. Try us with something else.

P. W. Braybrooke.—Corfe Castle is rather too hackneyed a subject.

Edinburgh.—Rather funny, but I fancy I've heard that joke before.

Elsa.—Our Hound sends his best respects, and after your nice message will on no account be so rude as to eat your letter. "**Owen Hardy.**" *Any* hospital, home, or workhouse would be glad of your old CAPTAINS. Send a bundle to the "Home for Little Boys, Farningham, Kent." **B. Vernon.**—Very neat, clear-headed, and practical. Go on as you are going, and you will always be a credit to that go-ahead city, Birmingham. **J. V. Rogers.**—Hope you'll prove successful. **Girl Reader** wants to know how she can get thinner. Her weight seems to me very little out of the ordinary, so I should advise her not to bother about it. Girls often weigh a lot when quite young, and get thinner as they grow older.

Athletic Answers.—We have a number of letters in hand, which will be answered next month.

Letters, etc., have also to be acknowledged from C. R. Halford, "Competitor," G. Roberts, "Tom, Dick, and Harry," G. Rye, "New Zealander," A. H., W. A. Mason, Albert J. Lock "Wendy" (I appreciate your good opinion very much), "Suggester."

THE OLD FAG.

Results of September Competitions.

No. I.—"£5 5s. for a School Story."

No age limit.

WINNER OF £5 5s.: G. Horace Davis, 28 Silver Street, Kensington, W.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: Kenneth Benniston, 308 Western Bank, Sheffield; Hubert Townsend, 2 Grosvenor Place, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Reginald H. Poole, 32 Wellington Street, Northwich, Cheshire.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Edith M. Taylor, Charles W. Roberts, James Todd, W. L. Adams, Bevan W. Lewis, Frances Whittingham, Letitia A. Laidlaw, W. Douglas Newton, John Hague, Alfred Judd, A. M. Carmichael, Leonard A. Pavey, Percy Owens, Henry V. Loxdale, W. E. Richards, D. Johnstone, J. S. Cohn, "Wenonah," Una Woods, George Long, J. Hague, Leopold Spero, Marjorie N. How.

No. II.—"Photographs that Tell a Tale."

CLASS I. (No age limit.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: E. Aitken, 8 Sciennes Road, Edinburgh.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: T. H. Stern, Brampton Rectory, Norwich.

HONOURABLE MENTION: W. J. Blyth, R. W. Copeman.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: Norman Sowden, Inglewood, Sandy Lane, Bradford.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: M. Walker, High Street, Redbourn, Herts.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Kenneth C. Biggs.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: S. C. Peacock, "Sunnylawn," Barry, South Wales.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Maurice Edward Nolan, Nassau Hotel, Dublin.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Colin Cullis, Jack W. Bridge, Rufus à Barrow Jeffery, Dorothy Tailyour, R. B. Crabb.

No. III.—"Old Houses."

CLASS I. (No age limit.)

WINNER OF "SWAN" FOUNTAIN PEN: Winifred M. Harry, Coldhurst Vicarage, Oldham.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Helen C. Tancock, C. J. Hankinson, Alfred Hinchliffe, William Roberts, J. A. Stembridge, A. A. Kerridge, Charles Reed.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF "SWAN" FOUNTAIN PEN: Katherine E. Ellis, "Woodside," Chadwick End, nr. Knowle, Warwickshire.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Bernard C. Curling, 44 Bryant Road, Strood, Kent.

HONOURABLE MENTION: C. H. Hirst, R. L. Statham, R. E. Hedley, Thomas Lax, H. L. Crawford, L. A. Pavey, Donald W. Rennie, C. W. Dockerill.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF "SWAN" FOUNTAIN PEN: Dorothy C. Giles, "Willowmore," Dollis Avenue, Church End, Finchley.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: L. H. Barfield, Geeston, Ketton, Rutland.

HONOURABLE MENTION: A. F. Webster, Harold Gleave, C. H. Trehane, A. Chapman, Elsie Paterson, Vernon Booth, Raymond H. Cutting, Veronica Davis, Dorothy F. A. Yarde, R. F. Clements, Eileen Ferine.

No. IV.—"Handwriting."

One age limit: Twelve.

WINNERS OF POSTCARD ALBUMS: W. G. Drysdale, 62 Lausanne Road, Hornsey, N.; Charles Blackley, 7 Buchanan Terrace, Paisley.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Norma Highet, 32 Norse Road, Scotstoun, Glasgow.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Jack Bennett, Ida Murphy, Miriam A. Beach, Charles Potter, Kenneth McKeand, R. Fagan, Beryl Grant, P. C. Hunter, Lionel G. Bickers, Kathleen Maturin, Stanley Taylor, David C. Browning, Jack Long, Harry A. Steedman.

No. V.—"Best Twelve Short Stories in Volume XV."

CLASS I. (No age limit.)

WINNER OF "BENETFINK" FOOTBALL: Sydney B. Wood, Broomhill Lodge, Goodmayes, Essex.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Alex. Scott, S. J. Giles, Ursula M Peck, George H. Bird, J. A. Davidson, A. E. Polley, T. A. Beed, A. W. Hopton, R. Chambers, B. Mitchell, F. M. E. Buss, C. H Greaves.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF "BENETFINK" FOOTBALL: E. C. Cushing, Roya Masonic School (Roberts' House), Bushey, Herts.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: J. C. Rennie, 28 Oxford Road, Putney, S.W.

HONOURABLE MENTION: W. A. L. Graham, Charles Smith, Bernard C. Cory, R. Yeats, Charles A. Keeting, H. L. Crawford, J. M. Glasse, Dorothy Burdett, John Webster, Albert Albrow James Bland, W. G. Legat, Bernard Petty.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF "BENETFINK" FOOTBALL: James B. Kincaid, School House, Chirnside, Berwickshire.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: William Mackay, 58 Saltram Crescent, Paddington; Arthur A. Allen, 40 Harold Street, Bolton, Lancs.

HONOURABLE MENTION: L. E. Henderson, K. H. C. Badger, Arnold Wilby, R. S. Morley, Arnold Peach, G. F. Bourne, C. Osborne, Drysdale Kilburn, F. C. Graham, F. A. Loveday, Horace Y. Light, Bernard Petty.

No. VI.—"Drawing Competition."

WINNER OF BUTCHER'S "MIDG" CAMERA: George William Kemp, 42 George Street West, Birmingham.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Fred. Paley 25 Northdale Road, Frizinghall, Bradford.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Robert Leo Payne, E. S. Whiteman, William J. P. McDowell, William Henry Sheppard, Alfred George Pike, James Clayton, A. S. Abercromby.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF BUTCHER'S "MIDG" CAMERA: Frank Maddox, 4 Dogpole, Shrewsbury.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: S. Vincent, 16 Undercliff, St. Leonards-on-Sea.

HONOURABLE MENTION: S. A. White, Sybil Vincent, Sidney Jefferson, S. C. Adams, Walter C. Orr, Robert S. Brown, Matthew Molloy, Arnold C. Tait, D. Carrington, Leslie Shaw, C. F. Chute, W. B. Bush, Alan W. Stapley, Alec Kennedy, Elsie Gledstones, Gerald J. Eastburn.

Foreign and Colonial Readers (July).

No. I.—WINNER OF 5s.: Leslie H. Burket, Blue Bonnets, Montreal, Canada.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Cyril Norman (Trinidad), George G. Proctor (Trinidad), Cecil H. Jones (New South Wales), G. N. Ebden (Cape Colony), Norman Vivian Tonkin (Transvaal), L. Sorzano (Trinidad).

No. II.—WINNER OF 5s.: B. A. Spence, Kingstown, St. Vincent, W. I.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Benjamin A. Smellie (India), G. N. Ebden, G. G. Proctor.

No. IV.—WINNER OF 5s.: H. S. Blinkworth, The Boarding House, Jamalpur, W. Bengal, India.

No. V.—WINNER OF 5s.: George Vanier, 861 Dorchester Street West, Montreal, Canada.

HONOURABLE MENTION: S. S. Phalke (India), N. V. Tonkin, Fred. Kirk (Canada), Julian Henrey (Transvaal), E. Gunter (Victoria, Australia).

No. VI.—WINNER OF 5s.: Anna Fredericks, Liesbeek House, Rondebosch, Cape Town.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Noel Taitt, Cecil Guthrie (Trinidad), C. Dunseach (Transvaal), Leslie H. Burket.

Winners of Consolation Prizes are requested to inform the Editor which they would prefer—a volume of the "Captain," "Strand," "Sunday Strand," "Wide World," "Technics," or "C. B. Fry's Magazine," or one of the following books—"Tales of Greyhouse," "The Heart of the Prairie," "J. O. Jones," "The Duffer," "Cox's Cough-Drops."

Comments on the September Competitions.

No. I.—One of the most popular and successful competitions we have had. A large number of really excellent stories were submitted, and the prize-winners are to be heartily congratulated. A certain number of competitors spoiled otherwise good attempts by a lack of naturalness and a rather pedantic straining after effect. The winning tale and a selection of the next best will be published in due course.

No. II.—This proved rather a difficult competition, and those competitors who entered are to be congratulated on their enterprise.

No. III.—We received many charming descriptions and still more charming pictures of "old houses," and the task of decision was by no means an easy one. The photos. of Baddesley Clinton Hall, sent in by the prize-winner in Class II., deserve special mention.

No. IV.—Quite a number of excellent entries were received, and some of our "youngest readers" deserve high praise for their good and clear handwriting.

No. V.—See "Editorial."

No. VI.—Some very interesting sketches of sign-boards were submitted in, competitors in Class II. being particularly painstaking.

THE COMPETITION EDITOR.

CHRISTMAS
ILLS.

ALL EYES FOCUSED SWIFTLY UPON THE FATHER AND DAUGHTER SEATED ON THE TUMBRIL.

THE CAPTAIN

A MAGAZINE FOR BOYS AND "OLD BOYS"

VOL. XVI. DECEMBER, 1906 No. 93.

THE ORDER FOR RELEASE.

A STORY OF ROBESPIERRE.

By ERNEST WILLETT. Illustrated by PAUL HARDY.

I.

ON the evening of June 18, 1794, the Citizen Robespierre sat writing in his room at a little table near the window.

The face of the Citizen, as he raised it from time to time to see that his wandering quill safely found the ink-pot, was the face of a man who had braved much, and had conquered. Perhaps the acclamations of the multitude still rang in his ears—the acclamations of June 8, when he, as hero, almost god, had burned incense and had celebrated the mockery of the "Feast of the Supreme Being."

He had heard but acclamations; and yet deep under the applause of the people had run a slow and savage murmur that still sped, repeating itself, although the applause was long since over, a murmur that took shape as a shout and roared its message in his face: "A bas le tyran!"

But the Citizen Robespierre heard nothing of the voice of Fate whispering his name to be registered with his victims, hence he courted composure and security, and made them his friends. Indeed, so soothed and placid did he feel that he determined to seclude himself entirely from the public gaze for a whole month;—a false step, that gave his admirers leisure to listen to his detractors and in the end to join them for his overthrow; a suggestive fact for the careful remembrance of all tyrants, particularly such as seek to scale Olympus.

But though the Citizen Robespierre hid himself from the eyes of Paris, and wrote indifferent verse for pastime, the tumbrils did not cease to bear their daily burdens to the guillotine, nor the street voices beneath his casement to proclaim the nightly list of those who had "glanced through the little window."

Indeed, on the particular night in question it was one of those very voices proclaiming such a list that caused that poetic pen to be laid aside and the "Incorruptible" to rise from his table and look down into the street below. He gazed upon the people at their nightly entertainment.

A band of men and women stood clustered round a savage-looking villain in a red cap who was busily engaged in bawling out the names of those who had suffered death that day. Each name was emphasised by the banging of a drum which a haggard woman carried by a strap slung over her shoulder.

"Ha!" muttered Robespierre, "Madame Vauban is zealous to-night; there is a note of Fate in her drum. . . . The people are with us, and all goes well!"

He was turning from the window when his eye caught the figure of a young girl who was evidently striving to attract his attention. He was used to such things; many sought to attract his attention. He regarded her idly enough until, coming nearer, she revealed to him a something familiar in the expression of her face that puzzled him. He could not recall her face. He wished the light had been stronger that he might have scanned her better. She, as though divining his wish, drew very near, and finally knocked at his door. He returned to the table and sat toying with his pen as though preliminary to making more verses.

A woman entered the room. "There is a young girl below, Citizen," she said; "a

young girl who desires to speak with you by appointment."

Robespierre smiled; the girl's ruse amused him. "Let her come to me, then," he said; "but first light the candles, for it is growing too dark even to guide one's pen."

The woman lighted a couple of branches and set them on the table; then she withdrew.

Robespierre moved the branches to where their light best fell upon the door, and then took up a position with his back to a little stove, the amused expression still fluttering over his features.

The young girl entered the room. She was dark, had fine eyes, wore a long cloak, and carried a small basket filled, apparently, with fruit.

At the sight of this small basket the expression on the face of Robespierre hardened, and his smile became grim. The girl observed these signs of his suspicion, and hastened to remove it.

"No, Citizen," she said, in a low, clear voice, "you are wrong; I am no second Corday d'Armans; I do not seek you out for assassination. There is no knife concealed within the basket; it is filled with fruit, good fruit," and she poured the contents out upon the table—"grapes and pears, and nothing else, you see. Accept the gift."

Robespierre bowed slightly. "What can I do for you, Citizeness?" he asked.

The girl hastily brushed her hand across her eyes, and Robespierre saw that they were dimmed by tears.

"My father is a prisoner in La Force," she said.

"There are many prisoners in La Force. Your father's name?"

"Jean Louis Saurin."

Robespierre repeated the name, and found that it carried him back to the early days of his career, when he was but a student at the College of St. Louis le Grand. He was ridiculed in those days for his mean face and stilted manner, and because he had entered the lists of Love with one named Saurin, a youth of handsome carriage and great wealth. And this Saurin had borne his idol from him, and turned his heart to bitterness in that day, and his mind to revenge. And here was revenge, accomplished for him without his individual effort. Saurin was in La Force; nothing could be more satisfactory. And yet—so many years had gone; his life had been so full; he had almost forgotten that young love and that young rival. He had changed the canker of Revenge for that of Ambition so long ago that it had well-nigh eaten away every thought that was not of itself.

He looked at the girl again. Yes, he understood why the expression should be familiar. She was *their* child; Saurin's daughter. And as he looked, all the old bitterness and hatred came surging into his brain like a flood. He was surprised at himself; surprised that the old desire for his revenge could spring up again in his heart; surprised at the force with which the demon within him whispered how easily private foes and old grudges could be set at rest in the arms of La Guillotine.

But he smiled at the girl, and motioned that she should be seated. She obeyed him mechanically, and appeared to wait for him to question her. He began at once.

"Your father?" he asked, "Why is he imprisoned in La Force?"

"Because, Citizen, he has the misfortune to be the nephew of the Marquis de Morellet, and as such has been proscribed an enemy of the People."

"And you? Why are you at liberty?"

"Oh, I! My old nurse hid me, Citizen, and Divine Providence spared me that I might visit you and plead for mercy."

Robespierre paused a moment. "It is a dangerous and foolish thing," he said, "for an aristocrat to seek protection from the People's Representative. Your mother?" he continued——

"Is dead, Citizen."

"And supposing that your father should die, too; supposing he might not be released to you, but, like thousands of others, had to forfeit life on the Altar of the People's Will?"

"I should not desire to live, Citizen!" cried the girl passionately. "I would die with him!" And she clenched her hands and stared at Robespierre with a fearless look of love and triumph on her face.

Robespierre had seen a similar look on the mother's face so long before. It did not please him to see it repeated.

"Ah!" he remarked with a cold smile. "I have heard that said by others. But we will see what can be done."

He sat down at his little table, and, tenderly moving aside the sheets of his precious verses, took a slip of official-looking paper from a drawer and a new pen, which he tried on his thumb-nail, the while he hummed a snatch of one of his own songs.

"You know that melody?" he asked.

"Yes, Citizen."

"You sing the little song, perhaps?" he inquired, with an indulgent smile.

"No, Citizen; but I have heard them sing it in the streets."

Robespierre coughed, and dipped the new pen deep into the ink. It is unwise not to sing your tyrants' songs.

"Now," said Robespierre, poising his pen in the air, "what shall I write for you, Citizeness?"

Had she been politic she would have said "a set of verses." As it was she fell on her knees and besought him, with all the tender love of a child—with all the wild despair and misery of one whose heart is broken by the terrible fear that everything may prove fruitless—to give her father back to her. Again she cried that life without him was worthless, that all her love and hope and future lay with the innocent prisoner.

"And so I am to write an order to La Force that your father be freed,—eh?"

"Oh, Citizen!"

"You do not ask a small thing, Citizeness.'

A knock came at the door, and the girl, rising hastily, withdrew into the bay of the window as Robespierre asked the visitor to enter.

A man came in whom Robespierre greeted by the name of St. Just.

HIS QUILL SCRATCHED ACROSS THE PAPER.

"Fifty-six to-day," said the visitor, bluntly.

"Ah," replied Robespierre, "so I heard. Madame Vauban struck them off on her drum this evening as usual, right beneath my window. The work goes on, then?"

"Yes," answered St. Just gloomily, "it goes on. Who is your visitor?" he added, casting a glance at the girl in the window.

"The little Citizeness?" said Robespierre, with a strange smile. "Her father is a prisoner in La Force."

An expression of impatience came into the face of St. Just. "A prisoner in La Force?" he repeated. "Bah! is that all? *There are too few there, my friend.*"

Robespierre glanced at him and leisurely took a pinch of snuff. Then he dipped his

pen in the ink with a sudden air of decision.

"Citizeness," he slowly drawled, as his quill scratched across the paper, "I am writing a letter. . . . for you to deliver . . . into the hand of the . . . Governor of the Prison of La Force."

"Thank you, Citizen, oh thank you!" The girl came out from the shadow of the window.

"You . . . will take it yourself . . . and if it is possible upon the whole earth for your father to be released . . . this letter will release him . . . But it must be kept a secret . . . you understand me? . . . for grave political reasons . . . To this end I seal it with my ring, that none may open it but the Governor himself . . . . You will start for the prison at once?"

"Oh, Citizen—can you doubt it?"

"No. St. Just, hold this taper for me (ah! steadily, the red wax has burnt my fingers!). . . . Well, it is done: take your letter, Citizeness." . . .

The girl held out her hand and received the sealed missive. She strove to speak, but no words came; her heart was too full of gratitude. She looked what she would fain have said to the Citizen; but the two men had crouched together over the table and now appeared oblivious of her presence: they were conversing in rapid tones, and Robespierre was ciphering figures upon one of the many slips of paper.

She stood watching them for a moment hoping that *he* would look up; then gathered her cloak round her and crept from the room, with a heart full of quiet peace because of the letter she clutched in her breast. When the door below closed behind her and she found herself in the street again, she paused a moment beneath *his* window to pray God to bless him; and having done this she stole swiftly away.

II.

The Governor of La Force was a man of many secrets and one well used to obeying sealed orders; moreover, the name "Robespierre," scrawled at the foot of a document dated June 1794, carried absolute authority from which there was no appeal. Had that document arrived eight weeks later it could have been used (with safety) as paper for battledores, for then the crafty brain that had schemed its message lay heavy and cold near, the dead hand that had traced its characters; but now——

The Governor, standing in the desolate and dimly-lighted courtyard of La Force and reading such a document through more than once—with a rapid glance between-whiles at the eager-faced girl before him—knew its power (for was it not June?), and finally shrugged his shoulders and beckoned to a ragged man who was parading the echoing flags with a swinging lantern in his hand and a bunch of heavy keys at his waist. At the signal this uncouth figure came towards the solitary pair with lumbering footsteps.

"Here, Jacques," said the Governor, "you still carry the lists of the morrow's condemned?"

"In my belt, Citizen Governor."

"Give them to me, and hold up your lantern."

As the ragged man obeyed, he cast a sullen look on the girl, who had instinctively drawn nearer.

"Saurin," murmured the Governor, searching the lists, "ah, ah,—Saurin—yes, number 47. (Hold your lantern nearer, Jacques.) Yes, Saurin. Jean Louis—nephew of the Marquis de Morellet. Is he your father?" he asked, turning to the girl.

"Indeed, yes, Citizen Governor!"

"Indeed, yes,—I am sorry for you."

"But you will release him?"

"To-morrow."

"Oh, then I must wait till to-morrow?"

"Assuredly."

"But might I not *see* him to-night? Just for one moment, to-night?"

The Governor looked curiously at the pleading girl.

"Let us see," he said, "your father is in number 47, West Corridor."

"East Corridor, Citizen Governor," interrupted Jacques, pointing with a dirty forefinger to the name on the list.

"West Corridor," repeated the Governor, with a meaning frown.

"It is true," murmured Jacques, abashed. "It is true—number 47, West Corridor."

"Conduct, then, the Citizeness to number 47, West Corridor," said the Governor.

"Am I to return *alone?*" asked Jacques, looking askance, the while he feigned to trim his lantern.

"Of course, fool!" answered the Governor, "do you suppose they want your ears and eyes to listen and watch at their brief interview? Conduct the Citizeness, and then report to me in my room. There is an alteration to make in the lists."

The girl started forward with a happy little

cry and seized the Governor's sleeve. "I understand you!" she cried; "my father's name is to be erased—is it not so? He will not die—he will not die! I have saved him."

The Governor made no answer, but, gently removing the clinging hand from his sleeve, turned on his heel and disappeared into the shadows of the gloomy courtyard.

"Come," said Jacques; and, followed by the girl, he led the way to number 47, West Corridor.

. . . . . .

"Well?" asked the Governor, when Jacques entered his room and stood before him.

"Citizen Governor, she is in Number 47, West Corridor."

"A scene?"

Jacques shrugged his shoulders.

"As one would expect," said the Governor, drily. "She will see her father to-morrow. Give me the lists."

Jacques complied.

The Governor, running down the list of names, stopped for the second time that night at "*Number 47, Saurin, Jean Louis.*" Bending over the document he wrote two words in a small clear hand below the name already there. The words were these:—

"*and daughter.*"

"CONDUCT THE CITIZENESS TO NUMBER 47, WEST CORRIDOR," SAID THE GOVERNOR.

III.

The morning whereon father and child were to meet dawned ruddy and sullen; the sun drew up the mists from the Seine and cast a stifling mantle of heat over the whole of Paris. About noon the blinding sky hung above the city like a sheet of burnished copper, lulling the turbulent citizens into drowsiness, in spite of drum and flag.

The Citizen Robespierre, seated at his little table and attired in the easy comfort of nightcap and bed-gown, felt that the excessive heat was beginning to interfere with his poetic labours, so, stretching out his hand, he threw open his casement to the hum of the city and to the encroachment of the flies.

A certain line in one of the Citizen's lyrics had caused him a degree of restlessness in the early morning, and being unable to correct it in bed to his entire satisfaction he had arisen, to pursue it with more diligence at his table. It was but a trifling matter, perhaps—just the polishing of some dull phrase—but the Citizen's rule of life was to give all things of his best. So he gripped his pen and toiled away, entirely unconscious of the daring flies, each so secure in the form of its creation that it could buzz with impunity about his head and still retain its own. Mortals were less fortunate.

But at length the offending lyric was made perfect; and the Citizen Robespierre, tossing aside his pen, threw himself back in his chair and delivered himself up to reverie. The hours crept by unheeded until a faint breeze that had sprung up carried the sound of a clock striking two somewhere below him in the city to his ears, and this awoke him to the time of day.

He arose, and leaving the room, dressed

himself and returned, for he knew that St. Just would be with him before the half-hour. Indeed, he was scarcely ready to receive him when he appeared.

"So," said Robespierre, "you are early, my friend, and gloomier than ever, I perceive. Which is it, then—the effect of last night's debate in the Convention, or this morning's fire in the sky?"

"The former," answered St. Just, folding his arms and leaning against the table, "the former. Your present policy of secrecy and seclusion is a mistaken one. Ah, you may snap your fingers, but we are in grave danger, very grave danger."

"Of what, my friend?"

"Of being denounced."

The Citizen Robespierre smiled placidly as he took up one of his lyrics and hummed an air to it, to see if the lines ran well.

The sight appeared to fill St. Just with the greatest irritation. Straightening himself convulsively, he commenced striding up and down the room, from the window to the door and back again.

"I tell you," he blurted out, "that the tide of favour is turning against us, that Tallien——"

"Bah!—Tallien!"

"——is working to undermine you with the people——"

"An impossible task——"

"——with your friends——"

"Ah! and has he been successful with St. Just?"

"You make a mockery of this warning. If so, it is madness!—Your name no longer inspires that terror which it did *three days* ago. Ah! you show surprise that I should reckon out our influence by days!"

"Not so, my friend; I merely show surprise at your vehemence."

"Listen to me, I say; conceal yourself but a few days longer from the people, absent yourself but a few days longer from the Convention, and you and I, with our friends, will stand beneath the guillotine!"

"Well, if it be so!—The people are all-powerful to support or to abandon me. I believe they will support, but if they abandon —believe me, I know how to die like Tiberius. That is enough."

St. Just, who was still striding about the room, paused now near the window as though some noise in the street below had attracted his attention. Robespierre joined him, and together they looked down.

The street was densely packed from end to end with a concourse of ragged people, who murmured and hissed and buzzed round the tumbrils that pressed their slow way through the crowd on their journey to the guillotine.

"You observe," said the Citizen Robespierre, "that it is not our lot to die to-day; this hour is reserved for others."

The tumbrils rolled slowly by.

"Can I be mistaken?" said St. Just. "There in the fourth tumbril sits the girl who came to see you last night."

"Let me see,—let me see," mused the Citizen Robespierre, quietly moving nearer to the casement, "yes, that is the girl; it can be no other."

"You notice," went on St. Just, "that she is seated next a man whose head is bent low upon his breast. Who is he? She glances up at us; she exclaims. I see her lips moving. The man looks up, too! You see? One fierce upward movement of his head—his eyes are prophetic! I would not have him look at me like that! How his glance devours all the windows round about us—for what—for whom is he looking? It is for *you!*—he has caught sight of you. Yes, Robespierre, in all its venom, his curse—his prophecy—is for *you!* We shall follow them. *He is her father!*"

Robespierre smiled, "My friend," he said, "you grow hysterical. As you say, he is her father. Saurin—Jean Louis Saurin, an aristocrat and enemy of the Republic . . . I met him years ago . . . he and I . . . and a woman long dead" . . , he paused an instant—"and this their daughter! She looks up again—she gazes full into my eyes! Now in this fierce light I see her plainly for the first time! Mon Dieu! how like her mother!—Stay! stay!"

Before St. Just could prevent him he had feverishly flung wide the window and stepped out upon the balcony.

The people observed him immediately and greeted his appearance with a hoarse shout.

"Citizens!" cried Robespierre, "Citizens, hear me! We who are willing to give the last drop of our blood for the good of the People, and for justice—shall we not see justice done even at the scaffold?"

A great roar of approval went up, and the mob swayed to and fro beneath the window.

"Justice must be done then to-day," cried Robespierre, "to one, a Citizeness, who, sublime in her heroic duty to parental love, is willing of her own free choice to immolate herself upon the same Altar of the People's Will that claims her own father! Answer me!

Shall she, innocent, untried, uncondemned by the Tribunal, be permitted to die? Shall not her readiness alone be accounted to her as completed sacrifice? Answer me!"

A wild scream of acquiescence rent the air.

"See, then," cried Robespierre, pointing to Saurin's daughter, "where she sits! The type of the good Patriot willing to give even her life-blood at the bidding of the Republic!" All eyes turned swiftly upon the father and daughter seated in the tumbril.

"I say to you," cried Robespierre, "that she upon whom you look appealed to me for her father's liberty, which I, as the Representative of the people, dared not grant without the People's voice and sanction! She left me to die with him,—so great was her love of him and of our cause! Behold them both, and declare your will: shall she die?"

"No!" yelled the fierce mob, surging round the tumbril and beating back the guard in a frenzy of emotion. "She shall live! Saurin's daughter! Give us Saurin's daughter!"

"And he?" pursued Robespierre, "he without whom she willed not to exist?"

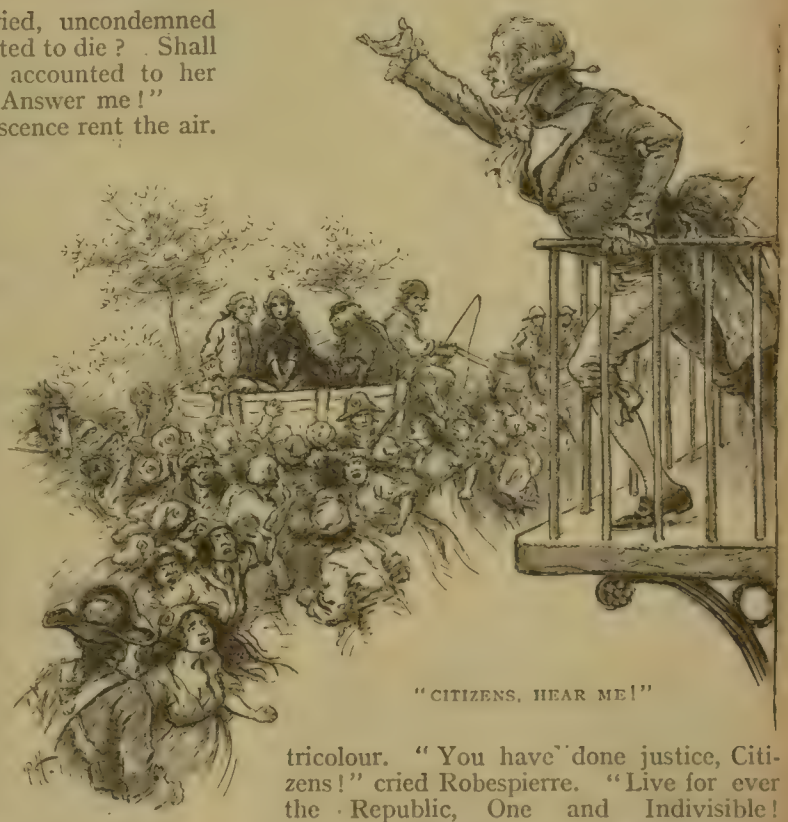
"She has saved him!" screamed the women, "she is a saint who has interceded for his sins, and has obtained his absolution!"

"Set him free!" roared the men as they swarmed upon the tumbril and fiercely cut the cords that bound Saurin and his child.

"No, Citizens! Hear me! I am Gaspard!" shouted a harsh voice from the crowd. "He is an accursed aristocrat! She is an accursed aristocrat! Let them both perish!" The crowd wavered.

"Never!" cried Robespierre, "the People have spoken with one voice! The voice of the People is the voice of God! They are free! I, the Representative of the People, release them!"

The crowd yelled their delight, and with weeping, singing and laughter they lifted Saurin and his daughter from the tumbril, wildly embracing them and binding their waists about with tattered cinctures of the tricolour. "You have done justice, Citizens!" cried Robespierre. "Live for ever the Republic, One and Indivisible! Liberty! Equality! and Fraternity!—I salute you." He raised his hand to the crowd, who passionately acknowledged the salutation as Saurin and his daughter, surrounded by blessings and tears, made their way through the seething multitude—to safety.



"CITIZENS, HEAR ME!"

Robespierre re-entered the room and closed the window. He looked fatigued.

"The mother's spirit in her eyes," he murmured; "that it was that saved her." St. Just was chafing near his elbow. "You have done a foolish action," he said irritably. "It will stand against you, Robespierre."

"Bah, my friend! I see no clouds in the sky as yet."

St. Just moved away from the window.

"The last tumbril has passed," he said.

Robespierre hummed a little melody.

"All things pass," he murmured, "and that episode is ended. To-mrrow may bring another. In the meantime I can think of nothing but my newest song. Come with me, and I will play to you Réaumur's setting to it—a delightful thing, believe me, fanciful, delicate. Come! there is, as you know, a harpsichord in the room beneath us."

SOME EFFECTIVE CONJURING TRICKS.

By DAVID DEVANT.

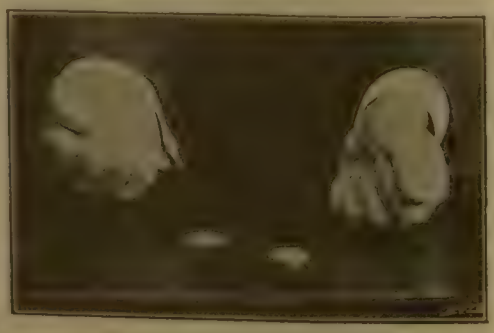
FEW things provide better entertainment and amusement at an evening party than the exhibition of simple but effective conjuring tricks. Conjuring is not the difficult art that most people imagine it to be, provided that the more advanced kind of tricks be avoided, and with very little practice the merest novice can give an impromptu display which will at once amuse and mystify. Some of the tricks which I am about to suggest may seem so ridiculously simple as to make the reader laugh at the suggestion of any one being deceived thereby, but if they are put before the audience in a suitable manner, are done neatly, and are accompanied by a continuous patter of amusing conversation, the result is sure to be successful.

When about to show a trick the performer should avoid telling his audience what he is going to do. It is the very surprise of it which will entertain, and in addition the audience, not knowing what is coming, will not watch the performer's movements so closely. The amateur conjurer's stock of tricks should always include a large number which can be performed with coins, cards, glasses, hats, and paper, or anything that may be borrowed easily, and I will only describe such tricks as may be done with simple objects like these.

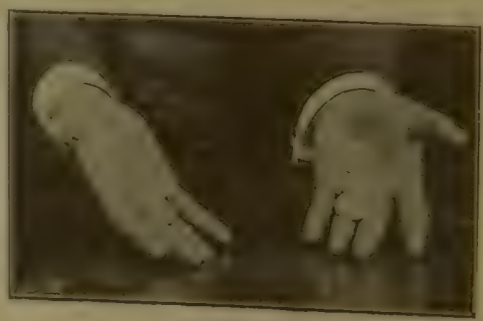
A Coin Trick.

There is an excellent little impromptu trick in which a coin is made to travel invisibly through the air. The conjurer borrows four coins—shillings are the most convenient in size—and places one coin in each hand. He then closes his hands over the shillings and asks some one to put the other two shillings on the nails of his two middle fingers. He thus has one shilling clasped in each hand and one shilling on a finger-nail in each hand. "Now," he may say, "it's quite an easy matter to throw a coin from one hand to another, but not so easy when you have your hands full in this way." He holds his hands a little distance apart and

THE COIN TRICK—FIRST POSITION.



AN UNSUCCESSFUL FIRST ATTEMPT.



SUCCESS!

gives them suddenly a quick upward movement. The two coins that had been resting on his two nails fall on the table. Apologising for being out of practice, he proposes to have another try and asks a member of the audience to again place the two shillings on his nails. When the coins are replaced the conjurer gives his hands another upward jerk, and closes them with a snap. This time one of the coins has travelled invisibly from one hand to the other, and on opening his hands the conjurer shows only one coin in one hand and three in the other.

How it is Done.

The first movement of jerking the hands was not done as carelessly as the audience were led to believe, for when the conjurer jerked his hands upwards, he opened one hand and allowed the coin inside it and the coin balanced upon his finger-nail to escape and fall on the table. At the same time he opened his other hand and took in the coin that had been lying on his finger-nail. Thus, before the second attempt was made, there were two coins in one hand and none in the other. The audience were led to believe that the two coins that had been dropped were those that had been placed on the performer's nails. When these were replaced all he had to do was to open both hands and take in the coins. The artistic performer, will, of course, look crestfallen after he has apparently made a failure, otherwise some sharp person may rightly come to the conclusion that the failure was part of the trick.

Thought-Reading Tricks

are always exceedingly popular, and there are many which are quite easy to be performed. For instance, the performer picks up a sheet of paper and hands it to a member of the audience with a request that three or four figures be written on it. It is naturally not easy to write on a sheet of paper unless there is something hard to write on, so the performer picks up the first thing that comes handy, which he is careful shall be a photograph frame, and puts the paper on the glass. He then turns his back to the audience while the figures are being written. The paper is then folded up by whomever wrote the figures and handed back to the performer, who holds it to his forehead as he walks back to the spot from which he addresses the audience. Having called attention to the fact that the paper has not been unfolded and that, therefore, he cannot possibly know what has been written unless he uses powers of thought-reading, he at once announces the number that has been written, and unfolds the paper to show every one that he is correct.

The explanation is very simple. Before the performance, one side of the slip of paper was rubbed with a piece of wax candle, and this side was placed against the glass of the photo. frame. The performer hands a hard lead pencil, not too finely pointed, to whomever writes the figures, and a very faint impression of these, invisible to any one not actually looking for it, will be retained on the glass. It is quite an easy matter to catch sight of the figures on the glass while walking away from the audience. Various ways in which this trick can be elaborated may easily be thought out.

The first essential of any

Card Tricks

is to be able to discover what card or cards the audience select. This may be done in many different ways, of which I propose to describe two. The first method is by far the easier and one

FIRST CARD TRICK—SELECTING CARD.

EXHIBITING CHOSEN CARD.

in which no mistake can be made. The conjurer holds the pack in his left hand face downwards, so that it is gripped by the thumb on one side and the fingers on the other. Bidding the audience select a card, he places his right hand over the pack and with the nail of his first finger draws the cards back one at a time asking that he may be stopped whenever they wish to select a card. When he has pulled back, say, twenty cards he is told that the next

SECOND CARD TRICK—NOTING A CARD.

BENDING THE CARDS.

DISCOVERING CHOSEN CARD.

card will do, and he then pulls this back likewise so that it forms the bottom of that part of the pack already pulled back. He then holds this portion of the pack up to the audience with the bottom card towards them so that they can see the card at which they told him to stop. In reality this is not the card they chose at all, for, just before he commenced to draw back the cards, he pulled back the bottom card of the pack about an inch and gripped the outside edges of this with the thumb and little finger of his right hand when he placed that hand over the pack. When he draws the top part of the pack away, therefore, he is able, at the same time, to draw away the bottom card of the pack, which he had previously noted, and it is this which is shown to the audience.

How to "Force" a Card on an Audience.

Another method, but one which is as much more difficult as it is more effective, is performed as follows. When the pack has been shuffled the conjurer manages, while ruffling the cards in his hand, to catch sight of some card about the centre of the pack. He then holds the pack in the left hand in an upright position so that his thumb grasps the left-hand edges, and his first and second fingers the right edges, while his remaining two fingers form a support for the bottom of the pack. When he caught sight of a card in the pack he kept a little piece of the flesh of his thumb in the pack at that point, so that the pack is slightly divided there. He then presses the thumb of his right hand upon the back of the pack, about half way down, and places the forefinger of his right hand against the top edge of the bottom card. Thus with this thumb and finger he can bend the pack back a little and allow the cards to spring one at a time into an upright position again. Holding them up to a member of the audience he requests that, as he allows them to spring back, one of the cards seen may be remembered. He then lets the cards spring back very quickly indeed until he arrives at the particular card that he had noted and the position of which is plain to him owing to the pack being kept slightly apart at that point by his left thumb. When he reaches this card he pauses for an instant and then lets the rest of the pack spring rapidly up. Thus whoever is choosing a card gets a slightly longer view of the one known to the conjurer, and, in nine cases out of ten, this is sufficient to ensure its being the chosen one.

The selected card having been discovered in either of these ways, its identity may be disclosed in any way the performer pleases. For instance, it may be shuffled to the bottom of the pack, which is then handed to a member of the audience to hold tightly by one corner. By giving the pack a sudden downward blow, all the cards are knocked out of the hands of the man who is holding them except the bottom one, which is retained owing to the additional friction of the finger beneath it. This will be seen to be the chosen card.

A Walking-Stick Trick.

A very effective little trick may be performed with a dark walking-stick, as follows: Make a loop of black thread about fifteen inches long and have this attached to the bottom button of the waistcoat. Borrowing a stick the performer announces that he is so magnetic

THE SECRET OF THE SUSPENDED WALKING-STICK.

that the stick will adhere to his hand without being held. Taking the stick in his right hand, he makes a great show of polishing it with his handkerchief, which is held in his left hand, the thumb of which has been slipped through the loop to keep it open. As he polishes the stick, he slips the end of it through the loop. By extending his left hand the thread will press the stick to his thumb, where it is retained without apparently being held. Provided this trick is not performed right under a very strong light, it will be impossible to detect the presence of the thread, and the effect is very mystifying.

There is a very good

Handcuff Trick

which can be performed with a piece of ordinary braid. The conjurer produces a small piece of braid, and, placing his hands behind his back, requests a member of the audience to tie his wrists very tightly together. He then faces the audience, and, in a few seconds, takes his hands from behind his back showing the piece of braid off his wrists and with all the knots untied, however complicated they may have been. To do this the amateur should have a small pocket in his trousers that is hidden by his coat tails, and in which are secreted a pair of scissors and a piece of braid exactly similar to that with which his wrists are tied. He can easily get hold of the scissors with his fingers, cut the braid round his wrist in such a way that none of it falls to the carpet, take out the whole piece of braid and slip the cut pieces into the pocket with the scissors again. The duplicate piece of braid should have a number of knots tied and untied in it beforehand, or else it will look too new.

An exceedingly telling little trick may be performed with

Magic Rings of Paper.

The performer provides himself with three paper rings, about a couple of feet in circumference and two inches wide. He takes a pair of scissors and cuts one ring in halves, thus forming two rings of about the same circumference, but only one inch wide. He then cuts the second ring in the same way, but instead of falling into two rings the paper seems to resolve itself into one large ring. The third ring is then cut in the same way, and this falls into two rings similar to the first, but linked together! The secret lies in the preparation of the rings. The first ring is simply made of a strip of paper, with the ends pasted together. The second ring—which falls into one large ring on being cut—is made of a strip of paper, but one end is twisted once before the ends are pasted together. When the third ring is being made the paper is twisted twice before the ends are joined. With the two rings so prepared the trick cannot fail. The artistic performer will remember to keep the twisted part of the rings behind his

THE COIN AND BASIN TRICK—SHOWING COIN TAKEN FROM BASIN.

SLIPPING ANOTHER COIN INTO BASIN

hand as much as possible when he is cutting them. After the rings have been cut they can be handed round to the audience for examination.

Money from Nowhere!

If you announce that you can produce money from the air you will probably be an object of envy! I will explain my own method of doing this. You ask for an empty basin. If you are offered one with a rim round the top, or with fluted sides, refuse it on the ground that it is too small or too large. You pick up the basin with the left hand, and hold it high in the air. At the same time you catch at an invisible coin in the air, and throw it into the basin. It is heard to fall there. "Oh, yes," you say, in reply to an imaginary remark, "the coin is a real one right enough. There it is." You then take out the coin, show it to the audience, and throw it back into the basin. You make another grab in the air for another coin, find one, show it to the audience, and throw it into the bowl. You repeat this operation several times, finding coins all over the room, and throwing them into the bowl. Occasionally you show the coins in the bowl to convince the audience that they are really coins.

The explanation of this trick is as follows: when you picked up the basin, you had a number of coins concealed in your left hand in such a way that when the basin was in your hand the coins were not visible to the audience. The coins were also arranged so that you could slide each one separately up the side of the basin. When you commenced the trick you had nothing in your right hand; but in pretending to catch a coin invisibly in the air, and dropping it into the basin, you really worked one coin over the edge of the basin while it was hidden by the movement of the right hand when you pretended to throw the coin in. Then, when you took the coin out of the basin to show it the audience, you apparently threw it into the basin again, but really you kept it in your right hand, holding it securely between the root of the second and third fingers and the middle joints. At the same time you slipped another penny in with your left hand. When you pretended to catch another coin in the air, you really allowed the coin already in your hand to appear at the tips of your fingers. (This is best done by a curious movement as though you are drawing the hand quickly away.) Then, when you apparently put the coin into the basin, you really again kept it concealed in the right hand, and with the first finger of the left hand slid another coin over the edge of the basin.

After a time, you may go among your audience and continue the trick. All you have to do is to keep the coin concealed in the right hand when you pretend to throw it into the basin. By this time you will probably have used up all the coins in your left hand, but that will not matter. You can get the effect of throwing the coin into the basin by knocking the right hand smartly on the edge of the basin when you pretend to throw a coin into it. Occasionally you can really throw the coin into the basin, and allow the audience to see it drop. You will then call attention to the number of coins in the basin, and, holding up a few in the air, drop them through your fingers into the basin again. Then you can go on catching money in the air, because when you picked up the handful of coins, you kept one concealed—in the way already explained—in the right hand.

CLERKS.

TO be a clerk in the simplest sense of the term is to be classified at once with the unskilled labourer; a man without a trade. The services of one who has some control of his pen, and who is able to keep a ledger but do little besides, are always at a discount. It is therefore of vast importance to the youth who finds himself, by force of circumstances perhaps, a junior clerk in, say, a merchant's office, to qualify himself in as many clerical attainments as possible, and to watch carefully every opportunity of securing advancement.

The man who has a trade at his fingers' ends need not, as a general rule, be long out of employment, and is at liberty to make almost any portion of the globe his home. With the clerk who is only a clerk it is very much otherwise; there are so many of his class that he has perforce to work for a very small pittance, and it always the cry of the Colonies that the supply of clerks locally more than satisfies the demand.—*From "Vocations for Our Sons," by John W. Hicks (Fisher Unwin, 2s. 6d. net)—a little book the Editor heartily recommends to all in search of something to do.*

A Soldier's Life. By P. J. Thorpe.

III. SERVICE ABROAD.

WHEN a soldier has completed his drills, fired his musketry course, and been put through a course of gymnastics, he is considered a trained soldier, and available for service abroad. Nor does he have to wait long for this, as frequent drafts are sent abroad during the year to reinforce the foreign battalion, which becomes weakened through deaths, men being invalided home through ill-health, and men returning home on completing their term of service.

And with few exceptions, soldiers, as a rule, look forward with pleasurable anticipation to the time which brings in its train the order for their embarkation for India or the Colonies. The tales spun round the barrack-room fire at nights have filled their minds with roseate views of the "gorgeous East," and although time may seem to hang heavy on their hands at home, they take comfort in the thought that for them still remain all the pleasures of the mystical Orient.

The passage out on the troopship is a novel experience, and one that they always look back to with a feeling of unmixed pleasure. The freedom from parades and fatigue duties, the sights of the ocean, the marvels of a sailor's life, afford them fresh delights every day, and although they are called upon to endure many little discomforts which are inseparable from a soldier's life on board ship, yet when port is reached they leave the vessel with sincere feelings of regret that the passage has not lasted for a much longer time.

THE NATIVE BARBER SHAVES HIM EVERY DAY.

Say their destination is India. As soon as they arrive in harbour they are surrounded by native craft laden with cocoanuts, bananas, mangoes, pine-apples, sweetmeats, and all the little-known products of the "shiny East." The Tommy's humour is tickled by the sight of turbaned boatmen stripped to the waist, with their dark skins glistening with the spray of the salt water, and their foreheads streaked with coloured stripes, indicative of the "caste" to which they belong, for every Hindoo, except the Christian, has his religion advertised on his forehead.

Landing, the soldiers are hustled into the train, and are soon speeding towards their station through a land rich with luxuriant forests, teeming with birds of the most gorgeous plumage, and almost every animal known to naturalists. Tropical flowers burst into view, kingly in their magnificent splendour, and the young recruit, seeing India thus for the first time, finds it an easy matter to conjure up a vision of what fairyland is like.

On reaching his destination, Tommy finds barracks very different to those he has been accustomed to at home. Built on a more extensive scale, soldiers' barracks at most stations in India are almost palatial compared with those in the United Kingdom. Every barrack-room has corridors running down each side of it, the sleeping apartments being separate and distinct from the dining-rooms. Ample space is given to each man's berth, the rooms are loftier, and greater provision is made for his comfort. In every way the War Office has a lot to learn from the Indian Government as regards the construction of barracks.

Life is very pleasant to the soldier in India. He has practically no work to do, no fatigues except such as relate to cleaning his accoutrements and tidying his berth. The native *hajim* (barber) comes round and shaves him every day for a mere nominal sum per month, while a *chokra* (youngster) cleans his boots daily for a small consideration. The *bowarchi* (native cook) looks after his meals, and, what is more, consults the "sahib" every morning as to what kind of dinner he will have that day. It is simply marvellous to see how these native cooks will go round a barrack-room

OTHERS REVEL IN THE DELIGHTS OF A HUNTER OF GAME.

of nearly a hundred men, ask each man what he will have for dinner, and, when the hour comes, bring each individual the special dinner he has ordered.

The lack of occupation in India, and the fact that the heat confines Tommy to barracks for the greater part of the day, are the chief causes of such intemperance as may exist. But for the steady soldier there is no country in the world that offers him greater opportunities of making the most of life. If he is of a studious disposition, Government provides him with teachers to instruct him in the native languages, and when he reaches a certain standard of proficiency he receives a handsome grant. Not only this, but when he passes the required examination, which is not a difficult one, he becomes eligible for any one of the host of well-salaried employments which the Indian Government holds out to the British soldier.

Gardening is a favourite occupation with many, and is generally pursued by them in the cool of the evening. In this they receive every encouragement as well as being rewarded with money prizes. Others, who do not mind the heat, betake themselves to the jungle, and revel in the delights of a hunter of game.

But it is for the thriftily disposed that India proves a land flowing with milk and honey. A soldier is so well provided for in the country, that his wants are but few, and everything is so inexpensive that he is enabled, month after month, to put by the bulk of his pay. Indeed, the public would be surprised if they knew what huge sums of money are brought home, in the Savings Bank, by regiment after regiment, as they return from India.

Of course, the soldier is located in other parts of the world besides India, some of them queer spots. For instance Aden, which is looked on as the nearest approach on earth to Hades, is nothing more or less than the crater of an extinct volcano, but with this exception every other station has many attractions for the soldier. Burmah is one vast tract of woods, forests, and lakes, offering golden chances to the soldier of an adventurous spirit; the Andaman Islands, a convict settlement garrisoned by a company of infantry, is an island paradise where the men spend their days and nights in fishing, shell-collecting, boating, and exploring the clusters of islands which have the appearance of so many gems on a sea of molten silver. Ascension, occupied by Marines, is a barren spot, yet its garrison have their little enjoyments. Similarly at St. Helena, although the barracks are perched on the summit of a steep rock, accessible only by means of "Jacob's Ladder," the soldiers live an easy life, with but little to trouble them. But this has now been given up as a military station.

It would be premature to speak of South Africa as a "happy land" for soldiers, with the experiences of the late war still fresh in our minds, yet before these troubles began the colony was a land of health, pleasure and excitement for the happy-go-lucky soldier.

IN SEARCH OF SMITH,

A Romance of Unexplored Australia.

By JOHN MACKIE.

Author of "The Rising of the Red Man," "The Heart of the Prairie," &c.

Illustrated by R. Caton Woodville.

SYNOPSIS.

Richard Payne, a retired surgeon, who in his earlier days had been connected with the Army, meets, at Southville Hydro., his old comrade, General Sir Donald Taylor, now also on the retired list. Sir Donald tells Payne that he is anxious to discover the whereabouts of a great friend of his named Smith, who according to the latest accounts was held captive by blacks in the unexplored region of the Northern territory of South Australia. The General prevails upon Payne to accompany him, and they set off to Australia together with Sir Donald's son, Jack, the latter's tutor, Maitland, and Parker, a manservant. On arriving in Australia they go to the house of the General's sister, whose daughter, Madge, is a typical specimen of the fearless bush girl. It is arranged that Madge shall avail herself of the expedition to visit friends on the MacArthur River, and the party starts. All goes well until the expedition is nearing the country where Smith is supposed to be in captivity. Then, one night, the camp is attacked by a horde of blacks. Maitland (to the general surprise) is proving himself no mean marksman when he is suddenly flung to the ground by a huge blackfellow, and on Madge rushing to his assistance she is picked up by the black and carried off bushwards at such a pace that it looks as if her rescue were impossible.

CHAPTER VI.—(*continued*).

THE ATTACK IN THE DARK.

WHEN the bold and burly savage made off with Madge flung over his shoulder, the audacity of the deed, and the suddenness with which it was executed, fairly paralysed us for a moment. Then some one started to run, but it was obvious that no bare-footed white man was a match for a horny-soled savage, even if the latter was handicapped by a human burden. In another minute the savage would have disappeared beyond the radius lit up by the burning grass and bush, and would have been safe in the dark forest aisles had not one of us acted quickly. Certainly it required considerable presence of mind, judgment, and skill to effect what Maitland did. He brought his rifle sharply up to the shoulder and aimed at the disappearing savage and his victim.

"Look out, or you'll hit her!" some one gasped.

And in all truth, while the savage by reason of his black skin was almost indistinguishable, the figure of the girl was very much in evidence.

Maitland's only response to this warning was to pull the trigger. There was a flash and a roar, and next moment we were running into the bush for all we were worth. The bullet had struck the savage on the sole of the left foot, and with his precious burden he had measured his length upon the ground. But an Australian blackfellow is one of the toughest and most elusive human beings on earth, and next moment he was up again, and off into the blackness of the forest, dragging his injured limb after him.

In a moment we were beside the girl, and any apprehensions we may have had concerning her condition were speedily set at rest. She was on her feet when we came up to her.

"All right, Uncle," she said composedly. "I'm not going to be a cannibal queen yet awhile. That was a good shot of some one's, by the way."

"You have to thank Maitland," said Sir Donald.

The girl turned to the Oxonian and held out her hand. She said nothing, but her action was eloquent.

After all, thanks were not necessary, and every one knew they were not wanted, so, as the enterprising savage was either making

good his escape amongst the undergrowth, or preparing to take a hint from the insect or animal life around him by posing as a blackened tree-stump alongside real ones, we made back towards the camp. Madge declared she was not a whit the worse for the rough treatment she had received, and, judging by her manner, we had not the slightest difficulty in believing it.

We could now hear the blacks some considerable distance away calling hoarsely to one another as they stampeded through the bush. Some of them must have blundered on to the horses, for within a few minutes we could hear the latter galloping towards the camp. That is one thing about the bush horses—they will nearly always make towards their natural protector, the white man, when attacked by savages, or when anything is the matter with them.

"Now then," cried Sir Donald, "are you all here, men?"

We had converged towards one of the waggons, and seemingly no one was injured or missing.

"Then look to the horses," ordered the General, "and don't get firing at everything you see in the bush. Fortunately, they were after higher game than the teams, though it meant a narrow squeak for some of us. Madge, my dear, you are really none the worse for your fright, are you? And Mrs. Bailey—how is it with you?"

"We're perfectly all right, Uncle," said Madge as she passed under the large propped-up tarpaulin, which really made an excellent sleeping-room.

Some people might imagine that in an alarm of the kind the women of the party would only have made matters worse by undue panic. On our expedition I found that on several occasions Madge and Mrs. Bailey were really as level-headed as any of us.

We did not go to sleep again, as it was close upon daybreak, but, after a pannikin of tea, hitched up the teams and resumed our journey. I was very glad indeed to leave that camp.

There is no time in the day so pleasant and delightful as the early morning for travel in the bush. The dew then sparkles on every leaf and blade. The noisy, bright-coloured bird-world flashing by gives a delightful sense of life, and the cool fresh air filling one's lungs makes one feel glad to be alive.

Madge, Sir Donald and I rode on ahead, as was our wont. We could see no signs of the blacks, who took very good care not to be caught in the open in broad daylight. The Nicholson river, whose banks we skirted, was still a great sandy waste with here and there long calm pools of water. A river which runs under its own bed for all but a few weeks in the year, when it swells into a raging torrent in which nothing can live, must be something of a paradox to people of the Old Country.

It was a matter for congratulation to Sir Donald to note that if Maitland had hitherto proved a somewhat unpractical member of the party—one on whom we men folk had to keep an eye lest he should stroll off fifty yards into the bush and get lost, or perpetrate something equally disastrous—he had qualities that more than counterbalanced these defects.

He had also grasped Jack's backward educational condition, and saw that it sprang from the want of proper guidance and encouragement. Here was work for him at which few could teach him anything.

He took his pupil in hand, and during the many spare hours spent in camp at midday he managed to secure Jack's interest in those studies most essential for the coming exams. He explained things to him in a way that invested them with a fresh interest and impressed them on his memory. There could be little doubt that Jack was making unlooked-for progress. At one time Jack had looked upon Maitland's inaptitude for sport with a species of pitying contempt. Now he began to realise that the scholar's qualities were of a higher order than his own. His changed attitude showed itself in many helpful little acts when he saw his tutor wrestling with temporal matters. Maitland's materialistic view of things was in turn being assailed. He was beginning to realise how one-sided his life had been, how theory without a full knowledge of life was merely chasing the shadows and neglecting the realities. Moreover, he began to realise how much more ennobling and comprehensive is the mental outlook of a man when face to face with Nature, compared to his views of life and that which lies beyond when his vision is restricted by conventions and bricks and mortar—man's work only. The few startling facts in natural history which Madge showed him set him thinking. The soul within him had never before been stirred, and, therefore, was an ungauged quantity. It was an unexpected and somewhat humiliating state of affairs, and he felt his former self-efficiency oozing, as it were, through his finger-tips.

Still, he had run too long in a groove, and the habits of years, like a man's methods of thought, are difficult to change. He was too much of a gentleman to assert himself rudely or press his views on others, yet he resented

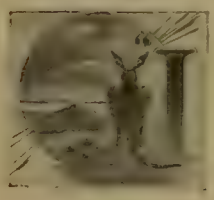
those influences which were at work to disturb his equanimity.

And a girl with a strange, original personality, had set those influences in motion. He would have liked to conjure up a healthy dislike to her, so that he could have lain in wait and crushed her with argument.

But the curious thing was, he had never before known that a man cannot always shape and control his likes and dislikes.

CHAPTER VII.

MADGE AS SHOW-WOMAN.



IT was Sunday, and, as usual, we did not travel on that day. Apart from the moral side of the question, it is foolish of any one to imagine that he or she can successfully steal a march on the laws of Moses. After a week's constant travel, a day of rest is not only a necessity for man and beast, but a welcome respite.

It was a beautiful spot in which we were camped. A goodly sized creek with large water holes lay on our right, and beyond it a wooded range of hills. On our left was a dip in the tableland, well grassed and dotted with fine specimens of blood-wood trees, white gums, ti-trees, and an occasional pine. Ahead, to the west, lay some low, rocky ridges on which grew banhania trees, golden wattle, tree-ferns and feather palms. Some of the gums were festooned with most gorgeous flowers and creepers. From occasional giant boles there sprouted great parasites, some of them green and some of them orange, and most of them for all the world shaped like the great antlers of moose and deer. Indeed, some of them are named Stag's Horn!

Gay-coloured birds, from crimson-and-purple parrots and green-and-gold parakeets to white cockatoos, darted through and over all like shuttles in a loom. It was, indeed, a primeval Eden.

We were somewhat to the north of the Calvert or Van Alphen River, and our horizon was limited by great rugged pale-blue mountains that rose from glaucous-green valleys, either abruptly or by gradual terrace-like sweeps. Some of the teamsters with us seemed to find a peculiar interest in these distant hills, for, like most of their kind, they had besides many other things done some prospecting for precious metals. We had to find a route round by the right of those hills if we were to drop Madge near her friends' camp on the head waters of the MacArthur River. After she and the Baileys left us we should have to steer south again.

The General and myself were writing up our diaries under the tarpaulin. Jack had an hour or two earlier taken a spare horse from the mob and gone out alone into the bush to get a view, as he said, from the top of a high ridge that showed a few miles off. The cook was busy stoking-up an ant-heap which he had converted into an oven in which to bake the usual supply of bread, and those who were not sewing on buttons and mending their clothes were reading the well-thumbed volumes that went the round of the camp.

I noticed that Madge had put her revolver in her belt and was preparing for a walk. In one hand she carried a stock whip, which would be useful in the event of an encounter with snakes. I saw Maitland reading, but he slipped the book into his pocket as he noticed her approach. But he made no move.

"Doctor," said Madge, addressing me, "get your light rifle in case of accidents and come for a walk."

"I'd be delighted, Madge," I said, "but I'm finishing this diary. There's Mr. Maitland. I saw him sewing on buttons some time ago. Take him for a walk."

Maitland was already on his feet.

"Come, Doctor," he said to me, "let's all three go. Perhaps Miss Taylor will point out a few more natural history marvels to us."

"They don't need much showing," remarked the girl. "They are everywhere if you only look for them. I don't like posing as a show-woman, but since we are on the subject I can show you something quite near at hand."

Maitland and I carried our revolvers, and in addition I took a light sporting rifle, for in that wild country a surprise attack by blacks was always on the cards. We had not to walk far for Madge's show.

It was a colony of soldier ants. Being under the shelter of a bank, the sun did not interfere with their movements. We stood a few paces off and watched.

"Hello," exclaimed Maitland, with a growing look of interest on his face, "there are two colonies of ants, and—by Jove, yes, just look!"

A pitched battle was being waged between two factions of those wonderful insects which Solomon held up to sluggard man as an example of method and industry, and which latter-day scientists have studied with even greater benefit. They were fighting much as men

fight. There was, on each side, a fighting line and a supporting body. They had out their scouts and flankers. They advanced by units, companies, and battalions. They had their leaders and commanders, and they grappled in deadly strife. Whenever a combatant was wounded he was borne off to the rear by the ambulance corps. Their pertinacity and method was astonishing. They charged each other vigorously, and the tide of battle rolled

"whose wonderful law of life is that but God's?"

And then the two had an argument, but despite the man's superior skill in fencing with words, the girl had undoubtedly the best of it.

"Miss Taylor," he said, "you are the first person who ever put the case before me like that. You must give me time to think."

Then, as if to close the subject, the girl plucked a dry pod from a shrub, tossed it

WE STOOD A FEW PACES OFF AND WATCHED.

now this way and now that. And while all this was going on, a score or so of busy little raiders were bodily carrying off a large black beetle, feet uppermost, under cover of the fighters. Doubtless, this was the bone of contention, the Port Arthur of all the trouble.

Maitland's face was a study, and he muttered something about instinct and the inscrutability of evolution.

"You may call things by whatever fancy names you like," said Madge quietly, "but somebody has taught these ants what to do."

"It is evolution," said the athiest, regarding the girl with unwonted earnestness.

"And granted evolution," rejoined Madge, lightly into the air, and split it open by one stroke of her long whiplash before it reached the ground.

"That is only anticipating Nature," she explained laughingly, "but I can't scatter those seeds anything like as well as the pod itself can, when at the right time it splits open with the heat, and throws them clear of the mother plant. God is the soul and brain, and Nature is his hand."

"Amen," said I, and though there could be no one more averse to making a parade of his religious convictions than myself, I took off my hat.

I was very glad indeed to hear Madge speak as she did. I had admired her from the first

as a fine, high-spirited girl, who, despite her unconventional, and at times rough, ways, had an honesty of mind and a fearlessness in championing the truth that made her stand out as a distinct and sterling individuality. That she should have thought so deeply made me realise that I had hardly done justice to her character.

Madge showed us a species of wild cherry, three-fourths of the stone of which grew outside the fruit. She pointed to a large bell-like flower that was a veritable fly-trap, and had the additional wonderful faculty of eating the flies its innocent-looking sweetness attracted. It got rid of the wings and other uneatable parts of its victims as the bars of a grate sort out the ashes. And amongst many other curious things which she pointed out there was a far-seeing plant which carried its own water-supply. To find one beautiful flower exhibiting omnivorous propensities, and another provided, like a camel, for all emergencies were surely startling and significant facts.

We had a merry and interesting walk, and it was with reluctance that we at length turned our steps campwards, for it was now somewhat past the dinner-hour.

Suddenly, as we ascended a ridge a mile or so from camp, we heard a couple of shots in quick succession, and then a third. Looking in the direction from which the sound came, we saw something that considerably surprised us and aroused our speculation. Far out on the open and lightly timbered level two horsemen were riding parallel to each other and at break-neck speed—for no apparent reason that we could see, unless it were that one of them was trying to head off the other.

"There is something queer about those two," said the girl, watching the retreating figures with hand-shaded eyes. "I think the sooner we get back to camp the better."

CHAPTER VIII.

A DISTURBING INTERVIEW.

FROM the account that we subsequently received of his adventures, we learned that, after riding a few miles from camp Jack ascended what he thought to be the top of a ridge, only to find another still higher behind it. He was picking his way up an old watercourse when he caught sight of three horses standing, ready saddled, in a little clearing. Whoever could it be in such an out-of-the-way place? Jack knew that in the Gulf country all sorts of badly wanted fugitives from the law were living like blackfellows in the bush, ostensibly as wild-horse hunters, but in reality because they dared not show their faces in civilised parts. Was he in the neighbourhood of any of these gentry now?

He would have turned and gone back, seeing that he was single-handed, had he not at that very moment ridden upon the men who owned the horses.

In the shadow of a ledge of rocks was a bark hut, open in front, and two men were standing before it. A third lay just inside the hut with a blanket over the upper part of his body.

One of the two men standing was Sam Holt, one of the teamsters. He was a big man with a face weather-beaten and lined like that of a Maori chief. He usually addressed Jack by his christian name, or as "Chummie," in the most paternal and free-and-easy fashion imaginable. But, in spite of a discomfiting cast in one eye, he was capital company and always had something of interest to tell. The second man was Bird, the other teamster.

"What ho, Jack! What cheer, my hearty!" Sam called out as soon as he saw Jack. "Been hevin' a trot 'round?"

"I saw the horses, Sam," said Jack, "and thought I'd just find out whose they were. Not going back to camp, are you?"

"No, Jack, sonny," replied Sam in his friendliest fashion. "You see, Billy Brooker, an old mate of mine, has the fever and is layin' down there on 'is blankets mortal sick-like wid the shakes. He's bin doin' a bit of wild horse huntin', an' I jist dropped across him by axydint. Hev' a drink of tea, sonny?"

"No, thanks, Sam. I'm off if you're not coming," Jack said. There was an odd sinking at his heart, and a nervous, jumpy feeling all over him as he took over the reins preparatory to starting. "By the way, Sam," he added, "if your friend is short of flour or anything, tell him to come over to the camp—and the doctor might give him some physic."

"You're a right good sort, Jack, my boy," observed Sam approvingly, and the man under the blanket nodded. Sam came over and stood close to Jack's horse.

"There's one thing I would like to know, sonny," he said. "Your father didn't go a tellin' of the crowd where these 'ere gold reefs was, did he? That rummy cove—Smith, you calls him—as lives 'way out in them goodness-forsaken parts like a canybile has played his cards well, and now you're goin' according to agreement to help him and to take up prospector's and other rights. If the crowd get on to it they'll spile your game."

At once the situation flashed upon Jack. These men believed that the mission was not to find Smith, but to locate gold. They imagined that the eccentric Englishman in the Never-Never country was merely prospecting in a misleading, if foolhardy, fashion. The General's party, they concluded, was going out to the relief of the venturesome one. By this time he had, doubtless, made some great discovery of gold. It had been whispered from time to time that somewhere in the heart of that chaotic mountainland was a "leader" of pure ore, for specimens of the same had been found in the decorated arbours of that picker-up of fanciful odds and ends, the Bower Bird, in the neighbourhood of these very mountains. Here was a situation full of momentous and sinister issues if Holt and Bird had joined with the idea of having a share in the discovery. The man under the blanket might be a scout from the main body of prospectors following the expedition.

TWO MEN WERE STANDING BEFORE IT.

"Seems as how ye're surprised," the man in the hut called out. "You toffs are mighty slick, and you've worked and kept this lay pretty dark, but you ain't agoin' to scoop all the pool this time, you can bet on that."

"You're out about the gold," said Jack quietly. "I don't suppose there's one of our party would know a gold reef if he saw one, unless it produced sovereigns ready made."

"Bully for you, Jack, my son," broke out Sam with a show of merriment. "Billy Brooker,"—he addressed the man in the hut—"don't you be a-thinkin' as how you can bluff Jacky here. He's as flip wid his tongue as you are. No, my son, I ain't sich a fool as to suppose you're agoin' to give the show away and let us put our pegs adown afore yours. Who finds keeps, I sez."

"It beats me, how men like you can believe in such cock-and-bull yarns," Jack said. "Sir Donald Taylor is out here to find his friend Smith, the man of whom you speak, Sam."

Sam turned to his friend, and, slapping his thigh triumphantly, exclaimed:

"There now, didn't I tell you that the old cock warn't one of them sort as looks for sunbeams in cowcumbers? Of course, he's no galoot, is the old snorter, an' if that chap

Smith, as seems to me to have a tile loose, has managed to spot gold, why, we can all have a look in."

"Of course you can, Sam—that's to say, should there be a show at all."

"Well, chummie," observed Sam, graciously, "seeing as how you wants to go, we'll not keep you. So-long, an' I'll be follerin' arter a bit."

CHAPTER IX.

TABLE-TURNING EXTRAORDINARY.

JACK started forward, and his horse, Barney, made straight for a low screen of scrub. Swish, crash, and the undergrowth was up to his neck, while Barney, with vigorous leaps, was plunging through it. It was as if some panic had communicated itself to the dumb brute.

Jack was out of the scrub now, and tearing along on the crest of the ridge. There was an avenue of trees on either side which would not permit of his descending the slope. But here was an opening to the right, and next minute he was galloping across and along one of the hollows that had deceived him when climbing the range. It was a place of giant ant-hills, and there was imminent danger of being unseated by the side leaps and dodging of the horse to avoid them. Moreover, the hollow seemed to wind in a most unsatisfactory manner.

As he rode along, Jack realised that it was no simple one-crested ridge, but a very network of ridges, with a series of artless-looking depressions that kept spreading out in all directions like the ribs on an old-fashioned gridiron. He was hopelessly bushed. That first quarter of an hour was a weird experience for Jack. It was as if he were in the throes of some peculiarly tantalising nightmare, in which, while the unfortunate victim is most desirous of putting space between himself and some intangible horror, his feet are glued to the earth, and he cannot make headway for the life of him.

Crash! Crunch! Crash! The horse plunged again into that exasperating undergrowth which seemed to be weaving a very Devil's coil around them. Nature seemed to conspire to entangle and hold them in her toils. Jack lost his hat, and his shirt was being torn to ribbons. The horse was all of a quiver and plunging as if possessed. Now, surely, he was through that labyrinthine thicket, for there was a clear space in front, and he had reached the open ground at the foot of the main range at last.

Then all at once he was confronted by a dead wall of riotous, straggling undergrowth, and he reined up in order to pull his senses together. He had lost his way with a vengeance and was making an utter idiot of himself. He got off his horse and walked.

Suddenly he heard a man laugh the other side of the scrub. Jack recognised the voice on the instant. It was Sam's.

How it had happened, Jack could not imagine, but he had obviously ridden in a wide circle while supposedly making his way back to camp, and was now within a short distance of the spot where he had left Sam and his companions. Dismounting, Jack left his horse and managed to push through the scrub for a few yards. He wanted to ask which way he ought to take. The scrub was terribly thick and difficult to penetrate, and he was on the point of turning back when he overheard a sentence that made him stand rigid. He must have been nearly through the dense patch, to judge by the clearness with which he heard the voice.

"Set the blacks on 'em, and you chaps sneak the ammunition. There's enough tucker with that mob to last us a year, long enough for us to knock some reg'lar Bobby Dazzlers of nuggets out of the find before we get back to the coast to sell."

"Look 'ere, Hawker—" he heard Sam's voice reply, and the mention of the name took Jack so much by surprise that he omitted to mark what else was said. He had heard of Hawker—heard, while in Burketown, that a big reward was on offer for the capture of the ruffian who had lately added murder to the long list of crimes he had committed. The police had warned the General that Hawker might be hiding in the district whither they were going, and also warned him not to be chary about shooting if the desperado was encountered and capture was impossible. The full significance of Sam's questions about the gold mine burst upon the lad. He had accidentally stumbled upon Sam and Bird in conversation with the outlaw, and now chance had sent him back to the spot to learn the danger which threatened the expedition.

He must get away; he must ride back to the camp and warn his father of the traitors who were with them. To be discovered where he was would mean a bullet through his brain and a riderless horse finding its way back to the camp. No one would ever find him. The man he had unmasked would take care of that.

As silently as he could he turned and crept back towards his horse. But for his struggles with the tangled vines he would have noticed that the voices beyond the scrub were now

THE HORSE PLUNGED AGAIN INTO THAT EXASPERATING UNDERGROWTH.

hushed. He scrambled out at last and, seizing his horse's bridle, leaped into the saddle. At the same moment there came a flash from the scrub, the report of a rifle echoed among the gullies, and something nipped his ear with a searing, burning touch.

The horse leapt sideways, nearly unseating him; then, taking the bit in its teeth, wheeled to the right and fairly bolted. *Bang! bang!* and as Jack crouched over the neck of his horse he realised that he had not done so a moment too soon.

(*To be continued.*)

THE KAFIRS.

By H. GOODBRAND.

THE Kafirs, as nearly everybody knows, live in South Africa. They are not exactly the same as negroes; they have not such thick lips, and they also speak a different dialect.

Uncivilised Kafirs live in round huts, which they make with a thatching of long grass covered with mud. A family very seldom live in one hut; they always have two or three of them.

The natives eat porridge for every meal; as for drink, water is good enough for them. In their joyous times, they drink *tchwala*, or "Kafir beer," which is a decoction of Kafir corn fermented for two or three days. This beer they keep in a calabash. A calabash is something like a pumpkin, only at one end it tapers out like the neck of a bottle. The natives collect these calabashes, scoop them

out, and then dry them. They serve admirably for water-bottles, when dry.

Dress.

A Kafir "boy" wears a *moucha* hanging from his waist. A *moucha* is made of strips of cowhide about a foot long, the ends of which are bound together.

A Kafir binds his moustache and beard with cane to make himself look nice. His hair grows naturally just like tufts of grass.

When it pleases the chief of a "kraal" a native is allowed to *tunga*, that is, to put on the head ring, which is a great concession. Very similar is the *kehla* of the "girls." When they are allowed to *kehla*, they work out their hair at the back of the head to the length of about a foot with red mud. This hair is very handy to them, as when they carry calabashes on their heads the hair helps to balance them.

The Kitchen Kafir.

You very seldom see a native who is not lazy. If you want him to do a thing well, you must watch him, although, of course, there are many of them who do not need watching. A "boy" is supposed to get up at six o'clock in the morning to light the fire, but you can generally count on him being half an hour late.

After he has lit the stove he makes the porridge, then starts to sweep out the house, which, according, to his ideas, should be done in ten minutes. Then he lays the table for breakfast. After washing the dishes, he proceeds to make the beds, and then he does any odd jobs that may crop up. Then he lays the table for dinner, and after washing up the dishes again he never on any account forgets to take his walk, which is a pretty long one and occupies him until about five o'clock. Of course, through all his work he has to be watched, or else he is out at the back talking gaily away to some *umfazis* (young women) or *intombis* (married women). He is very fond of musical instruments, such as the mouth-organ and Jew's-harp, the former being the instrument he likes the best. This liking for the mouth-organ he also has for the concertina.

Very few of the Kafir "girls" work much. Some of them are nurse-girls and some are washerwomen, but they are not as good as the "boys" for house work.

Togt Boys.

These natives are mostly middle-aged fellows, and some of them are very strong. They do all the carrying work at the ships, such as off-loading cases and loading up railway trucks. They also coal the vessels, carrying baskets of coal on to the ships in baskets. These Togt "boys" are hired by labour agents and get about 5*s*. a day.

It is interesting to watch the crowd of natives standing ready. About eight o'clock in the morning the labour agent goes along the line and picks out the strongest fellows and takes the number of their badges. This badge they purchase at the police station for 2*s*. 6*d*. a month.

Ricksha Kafirs.

Shaw ! ! ! Such is the ejaculation you hear wherever you go. Every morning people take "shaws" to go to work; that is, of course, where the electric cars are not handy. If you raise your hand in the street and shout "Shaw!" a dozen rickshas dart across the street in the endeavour to get to you first. Rickshas are very useful for short distances, as, for instance, when ladies go shopping; they cannot be bothered getting in and out of the trams every few minutes and paying a fare every time. Rickshas are also very useful in wet weather. It does not matter what kind of weather it is, the rickshas are always out. The pullers get wet, then dry, and stay out sometimes till midnight and never seem to mind it. Of course, it is very injurious to their health, and many of them die of consumption.

After the theatre, and at the railway station, you see a crowd of twenty or thirty rickshas, all in a line along the side of the pavement, waiting. When a train comes in, the "boys" jump up and whistle and shout such things as "Shaw!" "Two man," "Dis man he stlong man," to entice the passengers. Some of the pullers dress up grandly, wearing white calico with red braid, horns or feathers; in fact, anything that they think will attract any one into their rickshas.

The Kafirs work at many other occupations; some, for example, are street-hawkers, and some police constables. The bobbies think rather a lot of themselves, with their greased legs and their pill-box hats covering their ears, and they very seldom converse with other natives, who, they think, are much inferior to themselves—the guardians of the law!

After reading about these different types, I think you will agree with me that, taking "one consideration with another," nobody in South Africa leads such an easy life as the Kafir.

MY BEST BARGAINS.

A SOMEWHAT peremptory command comes from the Old Fag, that martinet of contributors. He says: "We don't want any dry lists of stamps in the Christmas number of THE CAPTAIN. You will just pull your chair up to the fireside, and spin us a yarn or two on the best bargains you have had in the course of your stamp-collecting, and, if you feel up to it, you may include a confession as to the bargains others have had from you."

HOW I WAS DONE.

Ah, yes, the bargains others have had from me; that touches a sore point. No collector likes to say much about his own little weaknesses. We are all caught napping, as the phrase goes, sometimes, but we are careful to say as little as possible about it to the world at large. Every collector, be he a devotee of old china, or coins, or postage stamps, loves to hold forth on the bargains he has made; the items on the other side of the account are not often exposed to the curious.

"I SUPPOSE YOU NOTICED THAT IT IS A DOUBLE SURCHARGE?"

Like most collectors, I have, now and again, had the worst of a bargain, especially in the days when I was even more easily imposed upon than now.

I once got from a dealer what I considered a pretty long price for a certain surcharged stamp, and at the time I wondered at his readiness in paying, without hesitation, what I asked. When he had tabled his dollars, he casually remarked, "I suppose you noticed that it is a double surcharge?" I had not; but I soon realised that I had sold for 25*s*. a stamp worth nearer £25. I have only seen one other copy of that variety, and for that the owner wanted £40.

HE WHO HESITATES IS LOST.

So I once learned to my cost. I had been buying from a dealer's stock-book a few stamps of a country in which I was beginning to specialise. I had been much tempted to extend my purchases, and while I was thinking it over, I was turning the leaves at the end of the book in an absent-minded sort of way. They were blank leaves, but when I came to the last I was startled by finding a full, mint sheet of an extremely rare provisional. I had no idea a complete sheet of it existed. It was priced £12. In those days that was a figure far beyond my range of speculation, but the prize was a grand one. I already had a partly reconstructed sheet of that same provisional, and I thought if I could sell that I might spring the rest. Before the day was over I sold my part sheet, and at once hurried

IT WAS GONE!

back to secure the prize. It was gone. As the dealer admitted, I had discovered a sheet that he did not know he possessed, and he frankly said that had I elected to take it at the price at which it was marked he could not very well have objected, but the moment I walked out of his shop he posted it off to a wealthy collector, priced £35. He promised me, however, that if it came back I should have the refusal of it at £30. It did come back, and I became its proud possessor. A few years afterwards a similar sheet turned up, and was sold for £150. That sheet now catalogues up to considerably over £300.

Bargains at Gibbons'.

Most people foolishly imagine that Gibbons' know a great deal too much about stamps to be caught selling a variety for a few shillings that may be worth pounds, but I have had more bargains in that establishment than anywhere else.

Once I was asked by them to go through a stock-book of my favourite country that had just been re-arranged by a celebrated specialist. I was offered the pick of the book, as it stood, if I would go through it afterwards and correct any slips. I agreed, and found, for my share, a rarity priced at 50s. that was worth at least £20. In going through the book I subsequently corrected many slips, amongst them that of a very rare variety priced as a common stamp. On another occasion I obtained for 3*d*. from the same generous firm a variety that is a very scarce and difficult stamp to get, so scarce that I question whether £3 would secure a copy. It is the old story of the accumulation of knowledge. The collector who never reads a stamp paper, and never troubles to join a Philatelic Society, rarely gets to know enough about the stamps of a country to spot a rarity when it is to be had almost for the asking.

A Stroke of Luck.

Many years ago I was specialising on a big country, and an intimate friend was also going in hot and strong for the same stamps. In fact, I had started him on the same track for the sake of his companionship.

We met regularly and we compared notes, and we worked away like a couple of Trojans at our favourite country. For a long time my friend was in leading-strings, but after I had taken him gently through the intricacies and explained the complexities, he gathered strength and confidence, and was a real help in discussing and solving not a few of the knotty problems that made our chosen country more than usually difficult.

In stamp-collecting the pleasure is greatly heightened if you can get a few cronies of like persuasion, and can meet to compare notes and discuss difficulties, arrangements, &c.

Well, my friend and I did all that, and we did more. We kept a joint eye on the auctions, and whenever any desirable lots in our country were included in a sale, one or other of us would inspect the lots and report thereon, decide prices and limits, and attend to buy.

We never bid against each other. We were the principal buyers in our particular country, but we did our buying unobtrusively. Very few knew much about those stamps, and no auctioneer was sufficiently acquainted with them to venture on an attempt to run us up.

Consequently we got many a grand bargain that has subsequently helped to keep us both out of the workhouse.

We did the business fair and square. When we got a mixed lot of stamps at an auction we "tossed up" for first pick, and then we took turn and turn. And I can tell you that that pick and pick business was a case of Greek meeting Greek. But what lovely things we got in those days!

I remember in one of the very first auctions we dropped on a large mixed lot that included fourteen grand copies of a variety that had been chronicled, but which we nevertheless regarded as legendary, for we had never seen a copy, nor had we ever come across any one who had possessed the variety. The lot fell to us for a few shillings. To-day each one of those stamps would fetch many pounds.

Then we wrote to dealers, English and Continental, and we divided our pickings of the stocks of Europe on terms and at prices that to-day awaken many regrets that we did not buy up all that was sent us—lock, stock, and barrel. After picking the cream, we returned what was left. Those remainders, in the pink of mint condition, with never even a hinge to mar the spotless beauty of their original gum, that we were offered for a

WE EVEN AVOIDED EACH OTHER.

few francs or marks! To-day every one of those francs, or marks, would mean a pound sterling.

For years we divided the spoils, and played the parts of David and Jonathan.

But, alas! in time my friend began to nose about on his own account. He wandered off into philatelic side streets without even telling me that he was going for a walk. And he picked up amongst the garbage of the alleys and lanes many a tit-bit that he did not share with me, and I was sorely troubled.

We grew less confidential and less mutually helpful. And when we met we began to studiously avoid even the mention of our favourite country. We inquired for the various members of each other's family as of yore, and we lunched together as in the days gone by, but somehow our old favourite topic was gradually tabooed. There grew up an ever-present suspicion that the other had got hold of something he would rather not discuss, and so we considerately and delicately avoided being too inquisitive.

Thus in time we drifted apart, till at last we even avoided each other. The veneer of our philatelic partnership existed, but it only existed to diplomatically cover the anxieties of separate enterprises and a quiet, but keen, competition.

One day, when my friend had become almost a stranger to me, I walked into an auction-room, and glancing round caught sight of him almost hidden behind a screen. Our eyes met, and we each understood why the other was there.

We shook hands, and then, as if no cloud had obscured or disturbed the even tenor of our philatelic friendship, I said in tones of surprise, as if I had thought he had gone clean out of collecting:

"Hullo, old chap, *you* here?"

"Yes," he said; and then, after an awkward pause, "I suppose we are both on the same errand?"

"I suppose so," said I.

"Well, what's it to be?" said he somewhat savagely.

"What's what to be?" said I.

"It's no use beating about the bush. You know you want to nail this sheet, and I suppose you thought you'd get it all to yourself?"

"Yes, I am sorry you are here."

"Well, I am going to have this sheet," said he emphatically.

"So am I."

"Humph!"

Then there was another long pause, broken by the knowledge that we were nearing the coveted lot.

"Well, what are you going to do?" said he.

"We can't do the pick and pick business with a sheet," said I, "and it's no good bidding against each other."

"Then what do you propose?" said he.

"We had better buy the sheet, and then toss up who shall have it."

"Which means that, with your usual luck, you'll get the sheet!" he grumbled.

"Can you suggest any other way? If we bid against each other we shall pay through the nose for our disagreement. We have neither of us any right to ask the other to stand aside, and we neither of us have a ghost of an intention to stand aside. But here comes the lot! What is it to be?"

With a very bad grace he agreed to "toss," and the sheet fell to us for a mere song—for, in fact, 20*s*.

Then we tossed, and it turned out as he had prophesied. I walked off with the sheet, bidding him to remember me to all at home.

Some years afterwards I sold that sheet to Messrs. Stanley Gibbons for £15.

THE SHEET FELL TO US FOR A MERE SONG.

Bargains at Auctions.

The auction-room is the prime place for bargains if you can find the time to watch and attend sales. I have picked up many a prize there. Some of the finest gems that have fallen to my share have been spotted in mixed lots herded away with common stamps. The cataloguer does not exist who possesses a specialist knowledge of all countries; consequently, every now and again, a very great rarity gets overlooked and sold, unnoticed, except by the keen specialist. Sometimes it happens that the prize has been quietly noted by several knowing ones. In such an event they all lie low and wait for some ignoramus to start the lot at a few shillings. A few cautiously small bids are made, till it leaks out that there are competing specialists, when the bids change from shillings to pounds. Once I found a very great rarity lotted as an ordinary rare stamp, and I felt sure, as it was known only to a few of us, that it would fall into my net, so I kept in the background and gave my commission to a dealer to start it at shillings, but to go as far as £12 if forced to do so. But, alas, I was not the only Richard in the field. It was started, not at shillings, but at £30. I was not so fortunate as a fellow specialist, who on a similar errand, at another sale, got for 18*s*. a rarity he was prepared to bid for up to £25.

RECENT AUSTRALIANS.

Watermarked Crown A.

ON January 1, 1901, the States of the Australian continent, together with the adjacent island of Tasmania, were formed into a federal commonwealth under the title of the "Commonwealth of Australia." It was announced that as soon as the financial arrangements admitted of it, a series of postage stamps of uniform design, and common to all the States of the Commonwealth, would be issued.

This uniform series of the new federation has not yet been issued, and during the waiting time each State has used up its old designs and provided itself as best it could in hand-to-mouth fashion. In all the States, Queen's heads are still current. In fact, the Australian Colonies may be said to be running emergency or provisional issues. Last year the first step was taken towards providing the uniform series by obtaining a stock of paper watermarked Crown A. But as the time is not yet ripe for the projected Commonwealth issue, the paper is being used for printing the old makeshift designs in each State. Consequently, the postal issues of Australia are in what may be termed a passing stage, and at any date may be superseded by the long-expected permanent issue.

Meanwhile, readers of The Captain will do well to watch closely the continual changes that are being made in the endeavour to tide over the waiting time with old dies. And it will help my friends if I set out for them a complete list to date of the stamps which have been printed and issued on the Crown A, or Commonwealth, paper.

New South Wales has given us a nearly complete series of its stamps on paper watermarked Crown A.

Wmk. Crown A. Perf. 12 × 11½.

½*d*. blue green.
1*d*. carmine.
2*d*. ultramarine.
2½*d*. deep blue.
4*d*. brown.
6*d*. orange.
8*d*. magenta.
10*d*. violet.
1*s*. purple.
2*s*. 6*d*. emerald green.

Perf. 12½.

9*d*. brown and blue.

Perf. 11 × 11½.

20*s*. bright blue.

Queensland has not issued any of its stamps on Crown A paper. It is still using up its roughly engraved Queen's heads printed on paper watermarked with a Crown and Q.

South Australia has given us so far only four values on the new paper.

Wmk. Crown A. Perf. 12 × 11½.

1*d*. rosine.
2*d*. violet.

Perf. 12.

3*d*. olive green.
1*s*. brown.

Tasmania has printed four values on Crown A paper. Some are perf. 12½ and some perf. 11.

Wmk. Crown A. Perf. 12½.

1*d*. rose red.
2*d*. violet.
3*d*. deep brown.
10*s*. mauve and brown.

Perf. 11.

1*d*. rose-red.
2*d*. violet.
3*d*. deep brown.

Victoria is credited with eight values on Crown A paper. Some collectors mistake the watermark on this Colony's stamps at times for the V and Crown, but the points are marked, for if the Crown A be held upside down it will be seen that the Crown is inverted even if the bar of the A is not distinct.

Wmk. Crown A. Perf. 12½ or 12 × 12½.

½*d.* green.
1*d.* rose red.
2*d.* mauve.
3*d.* orange brown.
4*d.* olive.
6*d.* green.
9*d.* rose.
1*s.* orange.

Perf. 11.

½*d.* green.
1*d.* rose red.

Western Australia has only issued four lower values on Crown A paper. They are all of the Swan design.

Wmk. Crown A. Perf. 12 or 12 × 12½.

1*d.* carmine rose.
2*d.* yellow.
3*d.* brown.
5*d.* olive yellow.

Perf. 11.

1*d.* carmine rose.
2*d.* yellow.

Those readers of THE CAPTAIN who are collecting Australians should secure copies of all new issues directly they are announced, as the whole lot may be superseded any day, and any variety may have a short life in the hand-to-mouth arrangements that prevail. As a case in point, it may be noted that just before the Crown A paper came into use Western Australia printed some 5*d.* stamps on *V and Crown* paper. The supply so printed must have been a small one, for copies are now priced up to 20*s.* which a few weeks ago could have been had for 7*d.* each.

The Stamp Market.

Messrs. Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., send for our inspection samples of the grand collection packets which they are offering in our advertisement pages as Christmas presents, together with a few specimens of their celebrated approval sheets. All the stamps are in temptingly clean, fine condition, and the grand collection packets certainly make superb Christmas presents.

Duplicate books of convenient size for the pocket are the order of the day; the latest comes from Messrs. Lewis May and Co., size oblong 4¼ in. by 5¾, cloth bound, provided with half a dozen neat leaves with shelves for holding the stamps.

Mr. J. W. Jones challenges our criticism of a special bargain of his in the shape of 1000 Colonials, &c., different for 15*s.*, but we can only continue to express our astonishment at the price. A 1000 collection of 1000 stamps, ready made, for 15*s.*!

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

L. N. (New Barnet).—There is no good colour dictionary for stamp collectors. There are several scientific works, but none of these would help you in understanding the colour conundrums of our stamp catalogues. As a matter of fact, we stamp-collectors are all at sixes and sevens about gradations of colour. For simple colours we are on pretty safe ground, but when it comes to the variations resulting from coal-tar colours we are all hopelessly at sea. Some day we hope some colour expert will help us out of the muddle we have got into. Meanwhile, you had better use your own judgment, basing it on the best instruction you can get as to leading colours.

J. N. R. (Ontario).—There is no catalogue quotation for the Canada Provisionals of 1899, 1c. on ⅓rd of 3c. and 2c. ⅔rds of 3c. They are catalogued but not priced. They were not an authorised issue. Personally, I should not care to waste money on them. The 2c. on 3c. rose, both types, are catalogued as follows:

	Unused		Used.
	s. d.		*s. d.*
2c. on 3c., maple leaves . . .	0 2	..	0 1
2c. on 3c., figures in lower corners	0 2	..	0 1
Surcharge inverted.			
2c. on 3c., maple leaves . . .	60 0	..	—
2c. on 3c., figures in lower corners	60 0	..	—

I don't know any dealer in Canada, but all the leading dealers in this country stock Canadians. I am not surprised at your finding it difficult to get good Canadian stamps in Canada. It is the usual experience that the early stamps are dearest in the country of issue. Canada is a fine country to collect. Its range of fine issues and grand shades going back to 1851 are hard to beat.

S. E. P. (New Zealand).—The 1*d.* New South Wales perforated O.S. are stamps used by Government officials—O.S. meaning official service. Specialising is, of course, the high-water mark of collecting, but I should certainly not advise you to waste your money on such rubbish as North Borneo. The current stamps of your own colony offer a splendid opportunity for specialising. The heading of your paper is all right: I hope the business will be successful in augmenting your pocket-money, as you anticipate, but to deal in stamps you will need to study a good catalogue.

Acknowledgment of Photographs.—The portraits of the Khedive and Lord Cromer published by us last month were by P. Dittrich, Cairo.

A CLERICAL ERROR

BY

STUART WISHING.

Illustrated by

T. M. R. WHITWELL.

YOU must imagine a good old-fashioned country house in the midst of a good old-fashioned snow-storm. The time is eight o'clock in the morning, and the date Boxing Day, 1905. The only people in front of a roaring fire in the breakfast-room are myself and my special chum Dick Steele, who was grumbling.

"All I say, old boy," he remarked, "is that it's a poor kind of joke to drag me out of bed five mornings in succession at this ghastly hour."

"Cheer up, Dickie," said I. "It's all in a good cause. You'll be awfully pleased when you know what it's all about."

"That's exactly what I complain of. You make me get up without giving me any kind of a reason, and expect me to look pleased! If you'd only let me into the know——"

"And spoil everything by telling you too soon? Not much, old hoss. Besides, I daresay it will come off this morning. Hark! there's the postman."

"You've said those blessed words every blessed day at the same blessed time," grumbled Dick, following me to the door. "Are you expecting a fortune, or what?"

He didn't get any answer, for I was struggling to shut the hall-door after taking in the letters. The postman, looking like a picture of Father Christmas, tramped off down the drive, and we returned to the snugness of the breakfast-room, carrying our prize. I began to sort the bundle.

"Here we are!" I said, after a moment's search, waving a long envelope in the air. "It's come at last, old boy!"

"Chuck it over," said Dickie. "I suppose it's a new stamp-catalogue."

"Look at the back—no, don't open it, you silly ass! It's not for me. Can't you see it's addressed to the governor?"

"Not if I look at the back, as you suggested," said Dickie. "Why didn't you warn me? I very nearly tore the flap open. Hullo! here's the school crest. Then it's only your beastly report."

"You're a regular Sherlock Holmes. It *is* my report. Now you can guess what the scheme is."

"No, I can't. And if I'd known that you only wanted to find out when the report came I'd have stayed in bed another half-hour. What are you going to do?"

"Come up to the den, and you'll see. By the way, did you stick that kettle on the stove?"

"Yes."

"Then it ought to be boiling by this time. Quick march! We've got a clear twenty minutes before breakfast."

"Worse luck," groaned the greedy beast, but I took no notice of his wails. Leading the way, and not wasting any time in talking I hurried through the hall, up the stairs, and

along a corridor until we reached my den. On this eventful morning my gas-stove was blazing as we entered, and over the stove stood a kettle, boiling merrily.

"What do you want the kettle *for?*" asked my chum.

"See this envelope?" said I. "What a chump you are! Steam it open, of course, and then——"

"But it's not yours," objected the idiot. "It's addressed to your pater."

"It's my report," I said wearily, "and that's good enough for me. Anyhow, the governor won't know, and it's not like a private letter."

"Then, you're—you're—" stammered Dickie, getting an idea at last, "you're going to alter——"

"Rather."

"You're going to—to report on yourself! Say you've been no end of a brick last term—an industrious and painstaking lad! By *Jove!*"

"Now, Dick," I said severely, "I'm not quite such a mutton-head as that. If I tried to scratch out a lot of words and re-write them, it would be spotted at once. No; all I'm going to do is—give myself a little extra holiday."

"By changing the date! Well, I'm——"

"Not a bad notion, is it? Here, give me the kettle."

I held the top of the envelope over the steam, and let it cook gently, while Dickie watched me with a mixture of admiration and fear.

"It's bound to be twug," he said, after a moment's silence. "Your governor——"

"Why should he? He's short-sighted, and I shall only make a very slight change. There's no chance of his meeting other parents this vac.—nobody lives near enough. I've no fear of the governor."

"Well," he objected, after doing a bit more thinking, "there'll be no end of a row next term."

"Rot," I said comfortably. "Suppose there *are* questions when I get back! The worst that can happen is the Head having me up and asking why I've come back late. I sha'n't tell him any lies. I shall simply say, 'Please, sir, the date in the report is so-and-so.' The Head *may* write to the governor, and the governor will naturally back me up. Then the Head will think some ass has made a mistake, and the matter will drop. In any case, a week extra is worth a pos. or a lamming."

The flap separated gently but suddenly under the persuasion of the steam, and I drew out the important sheet of paper with a cautious hand. I got a pen and some ink from the shelf and sat down to my work.

"Read out what Blake says about you," urged my chum, looking over my shoulder.

"No time to waste. We must get this done before breakfast. . . . Con-found!"

"What's up?"

"I thought we went back on the twenty-first."

"Well?"

"*Well!* Don't you see? If it had been the twenty-first I could have changed the one into a seven with a single stroke—easy as winking."

"'Date of breaking-up, Dec. 22,'" read Dickie. "'Boys return, Jan. 20.' That's all right, Charley. Scratch out a little from each side of the nought, and change it to an eight. You gain two days by that."

"You've got some sense after all," I admitted. "Lend me a knife."

Mind you, it was a very delicate job, and some fellows (clumsy chaps like Dick, for instance) would have made a mess of it. But I worked like a surgeon with a lancet, my hand as steady as a rock, in spite of Dickie breathing hard into my ear all the time. After doing the scratching-out, I joined up the lines with a fine nib, and the report read cheerily: "Boys return, Jan. 28."

I stuck down the flap once more, dried the edges with Dick's handkerchief, turned off the gas, and dashed downstairs hotly pursued by my fellow conspirator. We were just in time, arriving in the breakfast-room three minutes before the governor appeared, and the report was on his plate and hidden amongst the other letters before he caught a glimpse of either of us. The mater followed soon after, and we sat down to what I consider the jolliest meal of the day.

Half-way through breakfast the governor turned to his letters, and I'm bound to say that my heart thumped a trifle more quickly than usual. I don't think I was ass enough to blush, but I kicked Dickie nervously under the table to buck myself up.

"Ha!" said the governor suddenly, in the gruff voice he puts on when he wants to come the iron father over me. "Ha, Master Charles! what have we here?"

I hate being called Master Charles, but, not wishing to rile him, I let it pass. The governor adjusted his specs., and spread out my report.

"If," he went on, "if I were a betting man, I should not mind laying a hundred to one that your French master says nothing good of you. Let us see. . . . H'm. . . . Just as I prophesied! Listen to this! 'French, poor. He is frivolous and inattentive.' Can you explain that to my satisfaction?"

"Perhaps, dear," struck in the mater (who is simply a clinker for backing a fellow up), "perhaps Monsieur Tapont was in a bad temper when he wrote the French reports. Temper makes a great deal of difference."

The governor grunted in the most unsympathetic way, as if he'd heard that yarn before. It's simply absurd how he believes a master before his own flesh and blood.

"'Latin,'" the gov. read on, "'improving; Greek, fair; English composition, promising'; h'm—well, on the whole it's not bad, my boy: a good deal better than last term. And now let us see when you go back."

The awful moment had come.

"Ah, January 28, I see. The twenty-eighth," he repeated slowly, doing a bit of the mental arithmetic that he loves. "That gives you over five weeks: not far off six. Surely that is longer than you have as a rule?"

He looked at me inquiringly, and for the moment I was absolutely gravelled for an answer. Lies aren't much in my line, and I hadn't a suitable reply ready. Luckily, the faithful Dickie chimed in. He's a very tactful chap.

"Holidays never seem too long to me, sir," he said. "Did *you* ever think them too long when you were a boy?"

"When I was a boy," replied the old bird carefully, preparing to tell a real corker, "I always rejoiced when school-time came round again. I was quite glad to return to my studies."

He chuckled over his feeble joke for some minutes, but stuck the report back in the envelope and went on with his breakfast. I kept the conversation as much as I could on the weather and the chances of tobogganing, but it was anxious work.

* * *

You must now imagine that you have skipped a few weeks. In point of fact, it is the

"HAVING A FINAL LOOK ROUND AT YOUR GOODS AND CHATTELS?"

afternoon of January the nineteenth—the day before term, real term, begins. On this unhappy date I was sitting cosily in my den, oiling a pair of skates and eating Turkish Delight. I felt at peace with the whole world—even the Head, and was thinking what a thundering smart chap I was to get a week's extra holiday off my own bat. I had had a ripping good time for four weeks: the report had not been mentioned again: Dick and I had put in a good deal of skating while he was staying with us, and even now the frost showed no signs of giving. I could look forward to a lot more fun on the ice before going back to school, while the other poor brutes would be stewing over their books the greater part of the day.

Into the midst of this scene of cheeriness there came a Spectre of Woe. The Spectre made its presence known by a sort of choking cough outside my door. It was a queer noise, as if some one were trying to stifle a laugh. Then there came a knock. "Come in," said I; and the gov., who, like a sportsman, always knocks at my door, entered.

"Hullo, dad!" I said.

"Hullo, Charley!" he replied. "Having a final look round at your goods and chattels?"

"I'm just oiling my skates," I said, rather puzzled; "but I'm not having a *final* look round by a very long chalk. Why should I?"

The governor said nothing, but mooned round the room with his hands in his pockets, as if he had lost something. His eye lit on the Turkish Delight box, and he bagged the last piece without even asking me if I wanted it.

"Done your packing yet?" he said at last, shaping at an imaginary ball with my hockey-stick.

"Packing?" I asked vaguely, wondering if the old boy were off his chump. "*Packing?*"

"Yes, packing. Not much time left now, my son. You go back to-morrow by the usual ten o'clock train, I suppose?"

I felt as if the world were falling about my ears. Surely the great scheme wasn't going to fizzle out at the last moment, after all the trouble I'd taken! Surely the gov. hadn't spotted the faked date! There was a half-twinkle in his eye which I didn't like at all, but I pulled myself together with an effort, and tried to strike a final blow for freedom.

"We don't go back—that is," I corrected myself, "doesn't the report say we go back on the twenty-eighth?"

"Oh—ah—yes," said he, making another whack at the imaginary hockey ball, "the—twenty-eighth—I believe it does. That turned out to be a mistake. Dr. Summerscales wrote to say the proper date was the twentieth. Curious mistake on the part of the person who filled in the date. I should speak to him about it pretty strongly, if I were you."

"Er—yes," I said blankly, "I—I shall. But—but what on earth made old Scally write?"

"He wrote by return of post in answer to a letter I sent him. Somehow I thought the twenty-eighth was a—mistake."

"*Did* you?" said I, trying to keep my head. "But—how—that is—I mean—you see——"

The governor scored another goal in great style, and then turned to me. I fancy he winked.

"Perhaps, Charles, if you study the calendar you may find the explanation," was all he replied, and then he disappeared.

For the next ten minutes I sat dumb, wondering where the hitch had occurred. It was pretty certain that he had spotted my alteration of the figures, but it wasn't likely that he'd spotted it on his own: he was too short-sighted. No; some mysterious influence had been at work—something that I could not have foreseen. What could it be? I wondered.

Well, it was no use grousing: I had played my hand and lost. The gov.'s last words occurred to me in the midst of my gloomy thoughts, and with a sigh of bewilderment I hunted up a calendar and studied it earnestly. In less than ten seconds it dawned upon my brain, and I wished I had an extra leg to kick myself with, for—*the twenty-eighth of January was a Sunday!*

DECEMBER CELEBRITIES.

By Readers of "The Captain."

Santa Claus.

THE gentleman of whom I write is a philanthropist. He is very aged, but, as years pass by, instead of growing older and more infirm, he becomes not a whit less energetic, but rather gets jollier. He was born far away back in the remote ages, as likely as not in the month of December, and is said to have been the child of wealthy parents. Be that as it may, it is enough for us that, ever since his birth, he has devoted himself unsparingly to the good of mankind.

He is the especial patron of the young, and is much thought of by them.

With his good-humoured, rubicund face and flowing white beard we are all familiar, though no one has seen him; and who has not felt the air of happiness and benevolence which he leaves behind him wherever he pays visits?

He comes abroad to distribute his gifts but once a year, and then at the dead of night, not because he fears the honest gaze, but, because he, like all true philanthropists, prefers to give in secret.

On the eve of December 25, St. Nicholas, or Santa Claus, or, as most of all we love to call him, Old Father Christmas, sets forth with his sack, laden with good things, slung across his shoulder. His great delight is to find the weather frosty, and the earth clothed in pure white snow, for then he can travel in his sleigh on his yearly round to visit the homes of all good children.

The way in which he bestows his gifts is eccentric and entirely his own. Arrived at the first house on his rounds, he draws up his sturdy reindeer, and having selected a gift for each child (the way in which he chooses the right thing for each is truly marvellous), he springs from the sleigh. His next step we cannot trace—we only know that in some mysterious manner he makes his way down the chimney to the bedroom of the child whose presents he carries.

Most children are so accustomed to Santa Claus's visits that they expect him each Christmas Eve, and get ready to receive his presents in his prescribed form. So, before sleeping, they hang up their stockings, usually near the head of the bedstead, but sometimes by the window. The greedy ones get the largest stockings possible, but the others know that good Father Christmas would not forget them if they hung up no stocking at all. In the morning the stockings are full of presents, which often overflow on to the end of the bed!

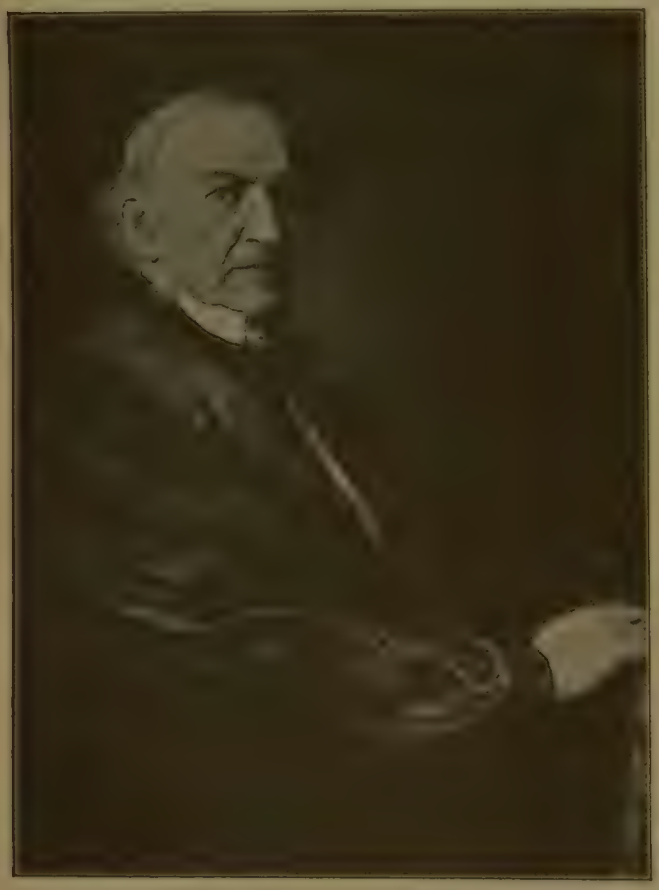
Another way he has of distributing his gifts is to hang them on a tree which is placed ready for his coming. The tree is usually a young fir, and looks very pretty when lit up with coloured fairy lamps.

But Santa Claus never used the Christmas-tree until about the year 1825, and likes the old custom better, though he sometimes uses both.

And the strange part of all this is that, lie awake as a youngster may, not a glimpse can he get of the old fellow.

May Old Father Christmas never cease to go upon his rounds, for he teaches us charity, and nought but good can come of that.

"CRESCENT."



THE RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.
From the painting by Sir John Millais. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

William Ewart Gladstone, born December 29, 1809.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE, the greatest parliamentarian of our times, entered parliament at the early age of twenty-two. He was faithfully attached to Sir Robert Peel, and when that great leader adopted the principles of Free Trade, Gladstone changed his opinions too and became in the end Liberal of the Liberals.

The taunts flung at public men who have changed their opinions have hardly ever been applied to Gladstone. He was absolutely convinced that Protection was wrong, and had the strength of character to assert his conviction, although it did not agree with that of his constituents.

From the outset he was recognised as a brilliant debater, but his first great speech was his reply to Mr. Disraeli in 1852.

After the latter had made a financial statement which convinced many of his strongest opponents that he had the capacity for making a good budget, Gladstone leaped to his feet to answer him. Then he showed to the full the one great quality in which as a political orator he never had an equal—a fluency which could pour out the most eloquent language on the spur of the moment. It cannot be denied that his wonderful gift of words sometimes led him astray. Gladstone had to pay for his fluency by being too fluent. His speech in 1852 won him the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer in the new government, and when he presented his first budget his reputation as a speaker was even increased. The speech occupied several hours, but no one would have liked it shorter by a sentence.

After 1852 he was four times Premier, and always tried to do his best for his country, regardless of personal fame.

What proved his downfall was his opinion about Home Rule for Ireland. He knew that he was in the minority, but "he nailed his colours to the mast, and foremost fighting fell." His South African policy also showed that he was ready to do what he considered best and to keep the peace, although the country clamoured for war.

Besides being a statesman he was an essayist, a critic, an Homeric scholar, an artist and a musician.

When he died in 1898 England could hardly believe that, after sixty-two years of parliamentary life, her great state oracle was at last mute for ever.

F. DE M. LAINÉ.

Rudyard Kipling, born December 30, 1865.

WITH truth it may be said of Rudyard Kipling that his name is a household word wherever the Anglo-Saxon tongue is spoken; if enduring popularity be any criterion, he may consider himself the greatest living English writer.

Although for the last few years he has, in vulgar parlance, rather taken a back seat, when at the height of his career he seems to have had the irrepressibility of Mr. George Bernard

Shaw himself; but, unlike that clever writer, he could not extricate himself from hot water.

The author of "John Bull's Other Island" knows how to wriggle, but Rudyard Kipling, or "Mudyard Stripling," as he was called after the unfortunate episode, has never fully recovered from the stigma he brought upon his name by the publication of the lines in which he referred to the exponents of the manly pastimes of cricket and football as "flannelled fools at the wicket, and muddied oafs at the goal." Written, perhaps, in a moment of impulse, these lines have cost him dear. Not even the undying fame he gained by his opportune verses on "The Absent-minded Beggar," and the immortal "Lest We Forget," can wholly efface the blot left upon his escutcheon by the hasty, and most certainly untrue, asseveration quoted above.

Of his prose works, those having India as the *mise-en-scène* are probably the most widely read, and in these the much-maligned Hindoo will be found to improve upon acquaintance. Kipling's dramatic power is shown to its fullest extent, in my opinion, in "The Light that Failed." The sensational finish leaves one almost breathless. In this work, also, the gradually but surely approaching blindness is drawn with an intense vividness that betrays the master hand. Kipling has in the highest degree the gift of creating atmosphere and of making his characters live and act like ordinary human beings. In "Captains Courageous," for instance, what could be more perfect in every detail than the portrayal of the homely cod-fishers on the Newfoundland banks? Even the vernacular is typically letter-perfect, and, it must be confessed, is so much Greek to the uninitiated. His tendency to become abstruse to the lay mind is especially evident in his more recent works, but in view of his undoubted genius we can afford to generously forgive this slight affectation.

H. L. Williams.

Lord Beaconsfield.

Benjamin Disraeli was born in Islington on Friday, December 21, 1804, or on the Jewish date 19 Tebet, 5565. He was educated at Winchester and Walthamstow. He was baptized at the age of thirteen, when his father embraced the Christian faith. He entered an attorney's office at an early age, but soon tired of the work, and after much travel settled down to a literary career. He published his first book, "Vivian Gray," in 1826. He again took to travel, and on his return to England tried to get into parliament, and at last succeeded in becoming member for Maidstone, at the age of thirty-three. When making his first speech in the House of Commons he was so disconcerted by the laughter which was elicited by his extravagant gestures that he came to a sudden and premature stop, but not before he had said: "I will sit down now, but the time will come when you *will* hear me." Soon afterwards he was elected member for a Buckinghamshire division, and when Lord George Bentinck died he became the county's chief member. In 1862 he was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, under Lord Derby, on whose resignation in 1868 he succeeded to the Premiership, which, however, he was forced to resign at the end of the year, owing to his having been defeated during a general election. He was made First Lord of the Treasury soon after, however, and was created Earl of Beaconsfield and Viscount Hughenden in 1876.

The Berlin Treaty was his greatest achievement, and he is to be credited with making Queen Victoria Empress of India. During his parliamentary career he wrote "Lothair" and "Endymion." He passed away five years after his acceptance of a peerage, and was buried by the side of his wife in his own village of Hughenden, in Buckinghamshire.

THE RT. HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G.
From an engraving. Rischgitz Collection.

Beaconsfield's early career was very disheart-

ening, yet his courage and tact, coupled with a very pleasant and kind manner, made him popular in the extreme, as his affectionately bestowed nickname, "Dizzy," tends to show. A beautiful statue was erected to his memory in Westminster, and this is decorated every year, on the anniversary of his death, with his favourite flower, the primrose.

DOUGLAS G. COLYER.

General Buller.

GENERAL SIR REDVERS BULLER, V.C., G.C.B., K.C.M.G., was born on December 7, 1839. The Bullers are a well-known Devonshire family, and Sir Redvers' mother was a niece of the Duke of Norfolk. He first went to a school in Devonshire, and according to the Reverend Walrond Clarke, who was there with him, came in for his share of thrashings, and his share of fighting as well.

From there Buller went to Harrow, but was removed through a misundertsanding between his father and his house-master, and was sent to Eton. He was fond of sports of all kinds, and in 1855 was in the third College Eight. Whilst at Eton, he decided to enter the Army.

He entered the 60th Rifles in May 1858, and in 1860 was engaged in the China War. In 1870 he accompanied Lord Wolseley on the Red River Expedition, and in 1873-4 did splendid service in the Ashanti War. In 1878-9 he was a leading figure in the Kaffir and Zulu Wars, and his command of "Buller's Horse" gave him the title to be reckoned among the most distinguished irregular cavalry leaders of his time. It was in the Zulu War that he won his Victoria Cross, a distinction, by the way, that he won twice over. In 1882, he was present at Tel-el-Kebir, and in 1884 was second in command of the Expedition to the Soudan, and took part in the battles of El Teb and Tamai. In 1884-5 he was Chief of the Staff of the Nile Expedition, and commanded the troops crossing the Bayuda Desert. In 1887, he was Under-Secretary for Ireland, and Quartermaster General of the Army, and from 1890-7 he was Adjutant-General. In 1898, he was appointed to the command of the Aldershot District. He commanded the Natal Field Force in the late Boer War, effecting the relief of Ladysmith after many disheartening reverses, and later doing splendid work in Natal.

He is a great collector of antiquities and curiosities. At Downes, his Devonshire home, he keeps the souvenirs of his campaigns in China, South Africa, and Egypt, amongst them a collection of enamels taken from the Emperor of China's Summer Palace at Pekin, in 1860. He is a county magistrate and Lord of the Manor of Crediton.

CHARLES H. B. WILLS.

Ludwig van Beethoven, born December 16, 1770.

THE name of Beethoven is in music what that of Shakespeare is in poetry,—one before which all other names, however great, seem to dwindle. He stands at the end of an epoch in musical history, marking its climax.

Beethoven was one of Nature's noblest sons. He had a powerful mind, and he set it to do immortal work; and such work did he do. He lived and toiled not so much for himself as for others. His character was simplicity itself; falsehood was absolutely foreign to his nature. He carried truth and sincerity almost to rudeness, yet so great was his personality that those to whom he was most curt were the fondest of him. Such conduct may have been due to his early deafness, his sensitive nature, and also to his absorption in music. Yet no matter what was the reason for his conduct, he always confessed to the fact if he were in the wrong. He was irritable, passionate, and of a melancholy disposition; but to counterbalance these undesirable qualities, he had a kind heart and most ocute sympathy.

Turning from his character to his personal

BEETHOVEN.
From an engraving. Rischgitz Collection.

appearance, a remarkable picture is disclosed. A short, stout figure, below middle height; a large head, with somewhat protruding lips; a pair of large, ugly hands; small, graceful feet; a profusion of black hair, thrown off his massive forehead, showing to the utmost advantage his intelligent face:—such was Beethoven's appearance. He was neatly dressed, ugly to look at, but "full of nobility and high feeling, and finely cultivated," according to the description of a friend.

Beethoven the musician is stupendous. From whatever standpoint he is regarded he stands supreme. The world has had no sonatist like him, and still more adequately the description applies to him as a symphonist.

Beethoven's compositions, one hundred and thirty in number, comprise all the forms of vocal and instrumental music—from the sonata to the symphony, the simple song to the oratorio and opera. In each of these forms he showed his depth of feeling, his genius. His piano sonatas embody a depth of feeling and variety of emotion, which are infinite. His nine symphonies show a continuous development from the simple forms of the early symphonies to the stupendous massiveness of the "Choral Symphony."

Beethoven's compositions correspond with his life—variable as the life, gloomy as the life, grand as the life. Surely a fitting tribute to such a life is the inscription on the tombstone—

BEETHOVEN

—one word, but quite sufficient,

G. A. Birkett.

Sir Isaac Newton.

Sir Isaac Newton was born at Woolsthorpe on Christmas day, 1642. Little Isaac was sent to school at Skillington and Skote until twelve years of age, when he was admitted to the free grammar school of Grantham.

Here he took a great interest in the manufacture of mechanical contrivances, among which were a water-wheel, a windmill and a water-clock. Not caring for ordinary studies, he stood very low in the school, until, as a revenge for a kick in the stomach, he worked himself up to the top of the form. After a spell of farming he was sent to Cambridge, where he matriculated (1660).

During the first six years of his residence there he invented his Binomial Theorem, and demonstrated the law of force in virtue of which the planets gravitate towards the sun. In 1669 he began a course of lessons on optics ta Cambridge. Two years after, 1671, he made a telescope with his own hands. This telescope is still preserved in the library of the Royal Society.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

After the painting by G. Vanderbank in the National Portrait Gallery. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

In his person Newton was short but well set. His hair was abundant and quite white. He is said to have remarked shortly before his death, "I know not what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

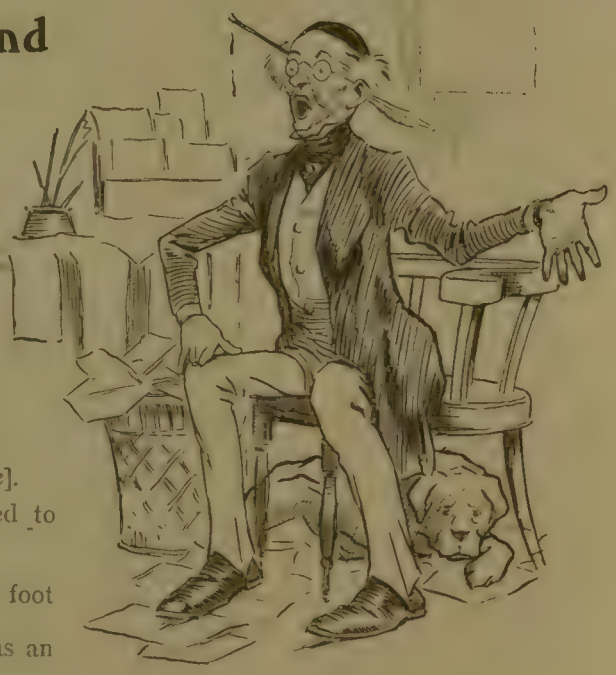
Newton was the greatest philosopher that ever lived and has benefited mankind more than any other human being. Pope aptly describes Newton's accomplishments in the following two lines:

"Nature and nature's laws lay hid in night;
God said, 'Let Newton be,' and all was light."

John Hawken.

A Master and His Dog.

By E. J. Patterson.



SCENE.—*The Old Fag's Sanctum. The* O.F. *is sitting at his desk; the* Hound of the Basketvilles *couchant under his chair.*

O.F. [*singing in a wheezy voice*].

"When I was young—as I used to be—
A fine young man was I.
I stood in my socks just six foot three,
And my chest was as strong as an old oak-tree,
And my voice would have frightened a Thames bargee,
In the days so long gone by:
But alas, in dissipation and injurious frivolities
I wasted all my physical as well as mental qualities.

"And now I am feeble and bald of pate,
And a sad old man am I.
I sit in my office in lonely state,
And I toil at the tasks I have come to hate:
I am grumpy, and weary, and out-of-date,
And I think that it's time to die [*sobbing*];
For my youthful strength is vanished, and
I'm such a sick and seedy 'un
That I look the very image of a broken down comedian."

[*The* O.F. *is completely overcome by his feelings, and melts into maudlin tears. The* HOUND *awakes, and looks up at him. He then addresses his master in a growling bass.*]

HOUND.

"Though my breed is most uncertain, though my looks are super-hideous,
Though my temper is as savage as my duties are invidious,

While my tail has strength to wag with,
while my teeth have power to crunch,
I will stick to you, my master, and will
share your daily lunch."

O.F. [*cheering up*].

"Dear old Hound, how much you cheer me!
Hang the blues! I'll sigh and growl no
more.
Come, 'tis lunch-time; settle near me
In your wonted station on the floor.

[*Here the* O.F. *draws from a tattered pocket a greasy packet of sandwiches.*]
Let us rest, then, though there follow
Hours which may reduce my brain to pulp;
You shall swallow when I swallow:
When I'm gulping, you shall also gulp."

HOUND.

"But first, together let us sing
Some simple little song we know."

O.F.

"'The Dog and Hack' is just the thing."

HOUND.

"All right you are, then; off we go!"
[*The* HOUND (*bass*) *and the* O.F. (*a quavering tenor*) *sing a duet.*]

O.F. and HOUND.

"Though Classic poets make a fuss
Of Pythias and Damon,
Of Theseus and Pirithoüs,
And heap a lot of fame on
The friendships of these worthy men,
They fail to catalogue
The friendship keen that grows between
A master and his dog.

"The master may be old and stern,
An ogre, only ruder:
The doggie's looks may give a turn
To any rash intruder:
Yet still together, firmest friends,
Along life's road they'll jog,
In rain or sun, till all be done.—
A master and his dog."

[*At this point injuriated bangs on the partition wall compel the duet to cease.*]

How Risden Played for Abbeyside

By Rev. A. N. Malan, D.D.

A Football Tale of the Fifties.

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell.

[A quaint story of long-ago school-days. Dr. Malan was a popular writer of boys' stories when middle-aged readers of The Captain were at school, and this tale shows that his hand has lost little of its cunning. In reading the description of the football match, readers must recollect that this is Rugby football as played in the 'fifties—when "Rugger" was much rougher, and victory far more dependent on individual prowess, than is the case now. A "maul in goal," for instance, partook of the nature of a wrestling match when both combatants are "on the mat." Such struggles sometimes lasted for five or more minutes.—Ed. Captain.]

FOOTBALL had never been played on any system at Abbeyside School till the Christmas half of 1856. Then, for the first time, a set of rules was issued. I remember with awe the majestic Rawlinson coming round the studies one evening before preparation, and doling out printed cards—one for each boy. On receiving my copy I timidly asked what it was for? "Football rules," he said; "and you have got to learn them by heart." I recall the forbidding aspect of the closely printed matter. There were twenty-four rules. I started to read them. They seemed so much gibberish, impossible to be understood—much less to be learnt by heart. On consulting with those of my feather with whom I was wont to flock, I heard things which sent cold shivers down my back. It was said we should be examined in the rules a week thence, and that if we failed in a single clause, we should be skinned alive. Poor wretches! how we quivered and quavered and tried to learn them, and how we found to our cost that there were worse things on earth than Greek verbs!

On afternoons we were drafted in herds to the field, and made to rush about, hustle, and scrimmage after the ball. Memory gets lost in fog. I suppose we more or less learnt the rudiments of the game, and I do not recall any examination in the rules. The worst that came of it was a pair of shins blackened with bruises, which were, after all, honourable wounds in the rough-and-tumble of school life, to be swaggered over to mothers and sisters in the Christmas holidays.

By the time George Risden was captain of the games, football had attained a recognised standing. The code of rules had been cast into a more or less satisfactory mould, generally accepted, so that matches could be played with local clubs. Abbeyside had not yet played any other school. To George Risden belongs the honour of inaugurating the first of those soul-stirring encounters. He first broached the proposal to Dr. Marsham, who looked with favour upon it, so that a match was arranged with the King's School at Sherford Magna. The excitement roused by the prospect of meeting the rival school of the west country was tremendous. We had already played the Town Club and the Yellow Amblers, in each case scoring a handsome victory, and we fancied ourselves invincible. Sherford had beaten us at cricket in the previous summer half, and Abbeyside, smarting under that defeat, was kindled to a white heat of ardour for victory. Furthermore, it would be the first match that Sherford would have played against another school. We knew that

they were doughty foes. Some of us had friends in that school, and letters passed to and fro, which were handed round and added fuel to the flames of enthusiasm on either side. Never could a match have been awaited with greater excitement.

Risden threw his soul into the stress of bringing the team to the highest form. He enforced rigid training for a fortnight before. Footballs were flying about the playground at all spare times. The team had to run round the grass after breakfast.

It was the day before the great event. Risden had given orders for the ground to be rolled, and as we came out of school from the last lesson at 12.15, he called me.

"Come and warm your toes by a sprint down to the field, to see how it looks."

I was soon racing after him. On reaching the field, the first thing that caught Risden's attention was a rook perched on the top of one of the nearer goal-posts.

"Hulloh! that's bad!" he exclaimed. "What does that beast of a bird mean by it?"

He picked up a stone and threw it viciously at the rook. The stone swerved in the air, and fell wide of the mark: the rook was supremely indifferent. Risden's face assumed a malevolent expression. He picked up a brace of stones, and stealthily approached the goal-post. When he got within easy range he discharged both stones in quick succession. The rook gave three derisive caws, and leisurely flew away.

"That's a bad omen," said Risden; "a prognostication of defeat! Bad luck to the brute! All big black birds, ravens, crows, rooks, are ill-omened. Three caws—three goals, or at least tries, against us—a dead certainty of defeat!"

I protested that such doctrine was vain superstition, and of no account. He fiercely resented my interference.

"Nothing you can say will make me budge an inch! I know what I'm talking about; I've proved it dozens of times. There is only one way to avert the omen—I must slay a rook before to-morrow. If that third stone had been an inch nearer, it would have knocked him over, and I could have wrung his neck in a trice. Bad luck to it!"

When Risden got a notion into his head, nothing could get it out. He walked across the football ground, which had been rolled to a nicety. He scarcely looked at it, and made no remark. He was silent all the way back to school: there was a lowering look upon his face, which boded mischief.

It was understood that the Fifteen would be all on the ground at 2.30 for hard practice; and the rest of us would look on, to show the keen interest we took in the coming match. And, of course, keenest of all would be Risden, to lead operations and explode enthusiasm by precept and example. Not so. Risden told his vice-captain, Powys, that he was going for a walk, and they must manage without him.

"Going for a *walk?*" said Powys, with eyebrows raised over wide-staring eyes. "Where on earth are you going to walk to?" Risden did not deign to answer: he stuck his hands in his pockets and marched out of the gates.

He passed briskly through the town, and when he left the last square of pavement he broke into a run. For two miles, without abating speed, he kept up a sound swinging trot—he had as good a wind as a footballer could desire. He pulled up at a rural homestead, known as Rant's Farm. He had the determination firmly fixed in his mind that by fair means or foul he would kill a rook before the football match. He had formed his plan, and nothing should deter him from carrying it out. He knew of certain trees in Honeycomb Wood on which rooks were wont to roost; and he made a compact with himself that he would not sleep till he had shot a rook. To shoot a rook it was needful to have a gun. He was on friendly terms with Farmer Rant, and he hoped to borrow a gun and ammunition. He found the farmer at home, and the loan was negotiated without trouble.

* * * * *

There was no time to go rook-shooting that afternoon before lessons. It would be pitch dark at 6 o'clock—but the moon would rise about 10, and Risden hoped that an hour or two later there might be light enough for his purpose.

He faced the fact that he was going to commit a serious breach of discipline: he counted the cost and fully estimated its gravity. But the object to be attained outweighed the attendant risk. He cared not for any punishment if he could only break the spell which enthralled his superstitious mind. To win the match was the all-important duty flashed upon his horizon. Nelson at Copenhagen could not have been more eager for victory. Risden put the glass to the blind eye of ambition and zeal for the

glory of the school, and he could not read the rule signalling that boys were forbidden to leave the premises at unlawful hours. For the hero of Trafalgar it was "Victory or Westminster Abbey"; for the captain of Abbeyside it was dead rook or defeat. For censure or praise the hero and the boy must be weighed in the same balance.

RISDEN POUNDED ON, BUMPING AND BARGING, TILL HE REACHED THE BOUNDARY HEDGE.

IT WAS A HARD RACE AGAINST TWO FIERCE ENEMIES.

The moon rose that night among heavy masses of black cloud. Risden, as he lay awake, watched anxiously for the window-panes to become "glimmering squares"; and so long it was before this happened that he feared the enterprise might be spoilt. Eleven o'clock struck, and all was darkness outside. But half an hour later the moon reached a lake of open sky, and its light illumined the room. The boys of his dormitory were all asleep. Cautious not to disturb them, he stole cat-like from the room—tip-toed down the corridor and down the stone staircase—crossed the playground—climbed the wall—and set forth on his fateful expedition.

He found the gun and ammunition where he had hidden them in a shed by the Pottery Works; and trailing arms he pressed at the double over long reaches of road, till he came to the lane that turned off to Honeycomb Wood. A sprint across two fields brought him to the wood.

The moon, which had been fitfully holding its own during that race, was now hidden by a black bank of cloud, and darkness brooded thick inside the wood. With much difficulty Risden forced his way to the roosting-place. There he loaded the gun, and waited for a break in the gloom. It seemed never to be coming. But at last he detected a luminous edge of the cloud-bank, and he watched it slowly thinning to the light behind. Then the last gauzy veil of cloud was withdrawn, and the moon shone forth clear. It was now or never—for another huge mass of cloud was coming up.

The tree-tops stood out clearly above him, and a dozen roosting rooks were upon them With beating heart, but cool and deliberate, Risden singled out the nearest bird—took careful aim—and pulled the trigger.

A terrific BANG smashed the silence, and echoed with an appalling roar through the wood. Down fell the rook mortally wounded, tumbling amid the branches to the ground. Risden seized the bird and wrung its neck. When the last quiver of life had ceased he flung the dead bird into a thicket, and prepared to decamp.

Now it happened that poachers had been busy of late, and three of Lord Honeycomb's keepers were on the alert that night in different parts of the wood. The keeper nearest to the report made tracks towards the spot with all speed. Risden heard him crashing through the under-growth, and he knew that a race of escape was before him. He shoved the gun into a holly-bush and plunged ahead. The moon was now hidden, and it was a rough game of blindman's-buff with the trees. The keeper heard him blundering through the obstacles, and Risden heard the keeper crashing nearer every moment. If only he could reach the open, Risden knew he could race a keeper day or night. But bumping against trees, tripping over roots, battling with tangled brambles in the dark, were tactics he had never practised, and he felt at a grievous disadvantage.

The keeper shouted as he came on: "We'll nab him this time! Cut him off at the gate, Will'm!"

"All right, Jarge!"

Risden pounded on, bumping and barging, till he reached the boundary hedge. Up it he scrambled, torn and scratched by bramble-barbs.—Jarge reached the hedge as Risden took a flying leap into the field.

"Round him off, Will'm!" shouted Jarge, and while Risden burst away at full speed he saw the burly form of Will'm galloping towards the gate. Risden had no mind to dispute the passage. Turning sharp at right angles he made for the hedge on the left—and now it was a hard race against two fierce enemies converging on his flanks. But he topped the hedge just as his pursuers reached it. Across another field with a like result. He thought of Achilles and the tortoise.

But now Risden was getting fagged. He had had much hard exercise that day, and no sleep that night—he was hungry—but he pounded on, and gained as he crossed the next field, for the keepers were stout and somewhat short of wind.

Risden had reached the railroad unawares. The hedge overhung a cutting. There was a string of trucks below, packed with drain-pipes in straw. That last field had about finished him—he slid down the bank, dodged under a truck, ran down along them, climbed into one of them, scrambled under the straw, and lay low.

It was some minutes before the keepers scaled that last hedge. He heard them talking: "He's given us the slip after all, Will'm."

"Worse luck—I was never so blowed in my life!"

Their voices grew fainter—they had evidently given up the chase . . . the straw felt soft . . . it was good to rest . . . he was awfully tired—and he fell asleep.

* * * * *

Risden slept. There was no doubt about it—a good honest sleep of the deepest depth—the debt paid to exhausted nature. He never woke when they harnessed an engine to the trucks at 5 o'clock in the morning, and started off with clank and clang of coupling chains, and snortings of steam, to run their fifty miles down the line to Thringham, where drainage works were in operation on Swampstone Moor.

He never woke till the navvies began unloading the truck in which he slept.

"Hulloh!" cried one of the gang; "here's a queer pipe!"

Two of his pals set their arms akimbo and laughed. Risden opened his eyes—yawned—stretched himself—and sat up. He rubbed his eyes and looked about.

"What's up?" he asked.

"So you've awoke up, guv'nor?" said Navvy the first: "seems to me you've had a night's lodging and a morning's journey free of expense. We'd like to drink your health anyhow, whoever you be."

"I'd like to join you," said Risden; "I feel precious thirsty—and hungry, too."

"What b'ye up to? What's yer little game?"

"Well, I'm trying to remember—it's a bit foggy—I went rook-shooting last night, and was chivvied by keepers, and I hid in the truck at Blanborne. What's this place? Where is the station?"

"There ain't no station nearer than Slipperton, five miles off."

"How far is Blanborne?"

"Fifty miles, and more—ain't it, Hicks?"

"That's about it, I should say."

"What had I better do?" asked Risden; "I must get hold of some grub somehow."

"We can give you a bit of grub—same as we have."

"I'd be thankful for it."

They were good-hearted fellows, six of them—and they made contributions from their baskets. They gave him bread and bacon and cold tea, as much as he wished. if he was to ride at the company's expense, he would earn his passage. So he helped the navvies in their work, and amused them with his experience of rook-shooting. The task was done before 11, and the return journey was begun. Risden was hopeful. He bribed the engine-driver to put on all steam. The man said he could do the run in 1½ hours—his engine was good enough, if they would let him alone.

"SO YOU'VE AWOKE UP, GUV'NOR?" SAID NAVVY THE FIRST.

Risden said he never enjoyed a breakfast more. And when he asked how he could get back to Blanborne, they said, "Same as you came—no better way—the trucks will be going back when we've done unloading them." They said they would start back about 11, and with luck they would reach Blanborne about 1. There was no train from Slipperton that would arrive sooner.

So there was nothing better than to stay where he was and hope for the best. He said,

They rattled along merrily for thirty miles, passing several small stations without hindrance, for the traffic in the fifties of the last century was not heavy in those benighted parts of the old west country. Well up to time, all looked hopeful, and Risden's excitement rose.

But at Yeoverland Station they were pulled up, and shunted to make way for an express. Half an hour's delay was in store, and Risden availed himself of the oppor-

tunity to have a good dinner off cold beef at the inn close by. He felt equal to any demand, if only he could be in time—the half-hour grew to three-quarters—he was sure to be late—they would have to play Tomkins as a substitute—Tomkins was not much class. A thought struck Risden—he would wire to Powys—*train delayed fear may be late play* 14 *at start keep place vacant.* To cut a dreary delay short—they finally reached Blanborne at 2.15.

Now we must wing the pen with a feather plucked from the bird of Jove, for excitement grows strong. Powys had sent two faithful myrmidons to get Risden's football gear, and to have a cab in waiting at the station. Risden saw his friends as he jumped out of the truck. They told him to get into the cab and change. In a minute the horse was at a gallop for the football field

The gates stood wide open, and the cab dashed in. The sides were just changing at half-time. Tremendous cheers greeted Risden's appearance.

"How does the game stand?" he asked.

"Sherford, three tries to nothing."

Risden made no remark—he knew his team, and they knew him. His presence infused a new spirit into the side. Powys had been obliged to play a defensive game, and Sherford had forced the game throughout, with the result of a strong lead. But when Risden took command, things were different.

There was no abatement of fierce aggression on the part of Sherford, but it was now met in the same spirit. Risden, playing three-quarter back on the left, forged his men into a determined force of attack. Shoulder to shoulder they pressed forward in a compact phalanx, urging the ball on by sheer vigour of momentous energy. The school, ranged round the ground, kept up a sustained shout of "*Abbeyside!*" The masters and visitors and a great concourse of townsfolk contributed to the general roar which brought the power of enthusiasm to bear upon the home side.

This forcing of the game soon brought the attack well into the Sherford realm—it looked as if the ball must be driven up to the line—but the Sherford captain at the critical moment adroitly hooked the ball to a three-quarters, who pounced on it, and by a brilliant run took the game into the home domains. Some loose play followed, in which clever things were done on both sides—the ball being kept for the most part in the enemy's half.

Then Risden again got his phalanx upon it, himself shoving mightily and directing the tactics to keep the ball in control. Slowly and surely the inverted wedge bored its way onwards. The opposing team augmented their resistance by calling in the three-quarters, but still Abbeyside pressed forward, till they were close on the back line. Then, dissolving the phalanx and releasing the ball, Risden seized it—to be instantly collared by Palairet, the Sherford captain. Over the line they went—both with a hold on the ball. The referee blew his whistle, and proclaimed a "maul in goal." The issue was to be decided by a single combat. The other players drew back, and the two champions stood facing each other, with equal hold on the ball. The whistle sounded again, and the maul began—the object of each being to wrest the ball clear of the other. If Risden succeeded, he might rush for a try: if Palairet succeeded he could claim a free kick. Such was the rule.

In a trice the combatants were on the ground, writhing in a fierce grapple—rolling this way and that—breathing hard with the tremendous exertion. Palairet was the taller by two inches, with longer arms in proportion—a man of wiry muscles and undaunted heart. Risden, more thick-set and robust, had greater endurance—and that told. After a terrific struggle Risden was conscious of some relaxation of resistance on the part of his antagonist. Putting all his strength into one supreme effort, he not only wrested the ball clear of Palairet's grasp, but released himself at the same moment. Then, on his feet the next instant, he bounded forward and touched the ball down midway behind the goal.

The supporters of the home team were frenzied with joy. The roars of cheering which had followed the struggle culminated in a deafening blast at its conclusion. And when Risden, from the place-kick, sent the ball straight and true over the cross-bar, it only remained to prolong the blast till lungs gave out. Sherford 9 points—Abbeyside 5—and ten minutes to time!

The sides returned to their places, the whistle sounded, and the last phase of the strife began. There was no abatement of stern endeavour, while no increase was possible. Sherford's great object was to make good the defence—Abbeyside's to press the attack. Risden again tried the forcing phalanx, but

Palairet deftly diverted its object. Fierce scrummages and frustrated attempts to break away filled five of the ten minutes with varied excitement. Then from a loose scrimmage Powys secured the ball and ran. Ten yards he covered before a three-quarter was on him: but he passed quickly to Risden, who set his teeth hard and burst away.

Straight on, with all his might, he rushed ahead, not attempting to dodge. His impetus bowled over two opponents—his right arm swinging in circles swept aside arms outstretched to grasp him. On, like a hurricane, he rushed—and with head bent forward he made for the full back. Catching him full in the chest he sent him flying to earth—and in a moment he had once more touched down behind the goal. It was a great display of strength, speed, and skill, directed by indomitable purpose.

He walked leisurely to the twenty-five yards spot. He never faltered as he directed Powys in placing the ball at the exact angle. The roars of cheering which had greeted his exploit subsided into a breathless pause, as every one stood spellbound to watch the issue of the kick. It was a moment to try the strongest nerve. But good old George looked calm. When the ball was placed in position and the opposing side dashed forward, he took two short steps and kicked! The ball flew, wheeling with a splendid curve, sure between the posts, over the bar! 10 points to Abbeyside—9 to Sherford. Two minutes of play left. Those two minutes had no effect upon the game. It was all over—Abbeyside had won!

It was all over. Even the shouting, which had been frequent in the interval between tea and roll-call, only now flickered up in some occasional spasmodic cheer in one of the studies—such mild ebullitions being condoned by the Sixth Form, who were responsible for order in the studies after evening roll.

Risden sat in his study expecting a summons from the headmaster, so when the shuffling steps of old John Bandicoot sounded along the passage and stopped at his door, Risden called out, "Come in, John: I know what you're after."

John opened the door. "Yes, sir, I daresay you do. The headmaster would like to see you, sir."

Risden hurried off. Dr. Marsham received him in his study.

"Now tell me, lad, all about it. Don't omit anything."

Risden told him everything, and finished up with: "I am very sorry, sir, for breaking the rule. I never did it before, and, please the rooks, I will never do it again. But I could not help it—I don't suppose any fellow could have helped it, who felt as I did."

Dr. Marsham had fixed him with a searching gaze during his confession; and when it was ended there was a pause. The Doctor was seated at his writing-table. He now lowered his eyes and tapped his fingers on the table in meditation.

Then he looked up, and spoke:

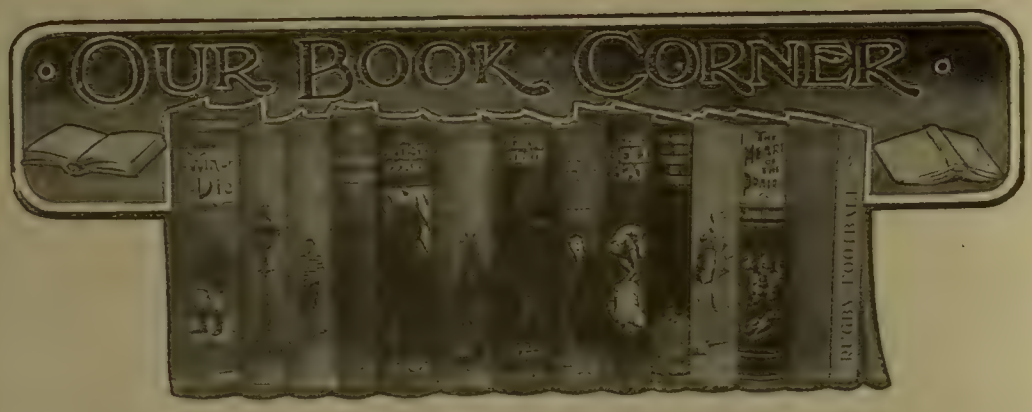
"Well, lad, you have made a straightforward statement. You were guilty of a grave breach of discipline—but, from your showing, the motive was one which I feel more disposed to praise than to blame. You acted on impulse, but the impulse was for the honour of the school. It was a superstitious impulse which dominated your sober judgment. I cannot for a moment countenance your suggestion that the rook gave three premonitory caws with reference to the match—such superstition is ridiculous—we must not go back to pagan follies and found rational conclusions on irrational vaticinations——"

"I don't know, sir — but if you had felt——"

"Stop—do not interrupt me. The question is, whether I am to inflict a severe punishment upon you for a very flagrant breach of discipline, or—or—whether. . . I feel weak and foolish, but how can I put it? I cannot say I will overlook the offence in consideration of the magnificent display by which you brought us victory this afternoon. It was grand! I honour and applaud your play, my boy, I thank you from my heart for your splendid work of wholehearted determination to win honour for the school. I—I—you can go—I will speak about it to-morrow."

The Doctor was evidently much agitated. Risden said, "Thank you, sir;" and left the room.

Next day the headmaster made a speech before the assembled school. He did not seem entirely at ease, and his habitual eloquence deserted him in his attempt to adjust equilibrium between the fault, the motive, and the victory. The nett result as regarded Risden was, that he was not punished; and the general verdict of the school was, that the headmaster was a jolly good fellow and a thorough sportsman.



The Boys of Brierley Grange. By Fred Whishaw.—(Chambers. 3*s.* 6*d.*)—Ingenuity of plot is the salient feature of Mr. Whishaw's tale, in which mystery follows mystery so cunningly devised that the reader, in his desire to solve the underlying problem, is torn by conflicting suspicions, and made to hurry breathlessly from chapter to chapter in pursuit of the final explanation. That explanation is reserved until the very end, and we cannot pay better tribute to the skill with which the author has woven his plot, and played upon the reader's curiosity, than by admitting our own inability (drooping eyelids notwithstanding) to lay the book down until the last page had been reached, and all that had baffled us was made clear.

Mr. Whishaw makes excellent use of his somnambulist, and indeed, so obvious are the possibilities which the vagaries of the sleep-walker open up before the maker of mysteries, that it is strange more authors have not made somnambulism part of their stock-in-trade. Since the whole essence of the success with which we readily credit "The Boys of Brierley Grange," lies in its puzzling plot, it would be unfair to give more than this hint of the latter's nature. For the rest, the author's characterisation is good, though not remarkable. His method could not be called forceful, but he contrives, as the story runs smoothly along, to convey individuality to his figures. The dialogue is natural, though both masters and boys have a slight tendency to moralise, and the latter are perhaps a trifle too academic, on occasion, in their speech. The fault, however, is on the right side. A little more labour in writing and a little more care in proof-reading would have been well expended. Even the least fastidious of readers becomes irritated when he finds such a phrase as "a bolt from the blue" recurring at intervals of every few pages. It is singular, too, that an author of Mr. Whishaw's experience could think of no better title than that which his volume bears.

But these are minor blemishes, and we take pleasure in writing down "The Boys of Brierley Grange" as amongst the best school stories it has been our luck to read of late.

Jack Haydon's Quest. By John Finnemore.—(Adam and Charles Black. 5*s.*)—This is a story which the author of "King Solomon's Mines" might not be ashamed to have written; indeed, it is one of the best books of adventure we have read since the appearance of Mr. Haggard's masterpiece. The reader's attention is captured at the very outset, and is held a willing prisoner till the last word is reached.

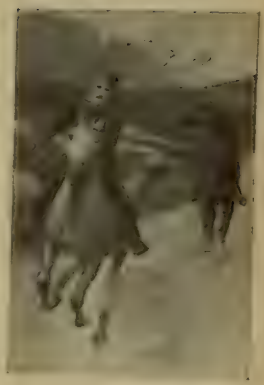
Jack Haydon's quest is to find his father. He goes with trusty friends, and, indeed, he needs them, for he encounters incredible perils. Some of the scenes one can only read with bated breath, notably the one in the swamp where Jack is shown the awful fate of a man, which may also be his. Another is in a deserted city where Jack and his friends take refuge in a pagoda, to find it to

be the habitation of a tigress and her cubs. The grand *finale* is the finding of the secret hiding-place of the jewels with which a king, five hundred years before, had decorated this pagoda,—a gruesome hiding-place, a chamber of the dead, where lay the bleached skeletons of the men who had fallen on the sack of the city. We may say that Jack's quest was over long before his adventures ended, and his father shared in many of them.

The Romance of Plant Life. By G. F. Scott Elliot, M.A., B.Sc., &c. (Seeley and Co., Ltd. 5*s.*), deals with a large number of the curiosities of botany and the marvellous things relating to plants in all parts of the world. Plants as manufacturers; their influence upon other living things and the world in general; the life of a tree; man and forests; flowers and insects; the underground life of plants; the stories of tea, coffee, cocoa, and tobacco; plants of the deserts; our fields and their plants; plants that help to build continents; vegetable demons and folk-lore; movements of plants; wandering fruits and seeds; the story of our crops; climbing plants; parasites and carnivorous plants; the names of plants. Under all these and many other heads, Professor Scott Elliot has much romance to impart to us, and we believe that many healthy boys would get more satisfactory enjoyment out of his book than from the average adventure book, even though the marvels here described have the disadvantage of being all true! The illustrations are, on the whole, very accurate and well executed. We have pleasure in recommending this book to readers who have been invited to "nominate" suitable Christmas presents for themselves or friends.

Foray and Fight. By John Finnemore.—(W. and R. Chambers. 3*s.* 6*d.*)—The true history of the fierce struggles between the Turks and their Christian dependencies has yet to be written.

There are some writers who tell us that the Turk is a quiet, kindly individual, stirred to reprisals only by the villainies of the Armenians and Bulgarians, who are Christians only in name. A still larger number, however, assert that the Turk is an unspeakable ruffian who treats his Christian fellow subjects and dependants in a manner worthy of the lowest savages. Mr. Finnemore apparently inclines to the latter view.



His story describes the adventures of a young Englishman and an American in Macedonia. The Christians, ground down by a corrupt system of taxation, can only find relief in revolt against their oppressors, and a strong sense of justice leads the two young men to side with the oppressed.

The story recounts a series of events in the guerilla warfare carried on by the rebels. The down-trodden inhabitants of Christian villages are assisted to cross the frontier, and the Turkish forces are continually harried. The two heroes bear charmed lives and, after many hairbreadth escapes, eventually return to civilisation none the worse for their adventures. In spite of a lack of definite plot, the story is brightly written and full of incident, and there is plenty of local colour which successfully gives an atmosphere of reality to the story.

Mr. Finnemore may be congratulated on having written a thoroughly wholesome and readable book.

The Children's Odyssey. By the Rev. A. J. Church.—(Seeley and Co. 5*s.*)—Of all the fascinating stories to be found in the literature of Greece and Ancient Rome there are none that appeal more strongly to the imagination of children than those which tell of the adventures of the great hero Ulysses.

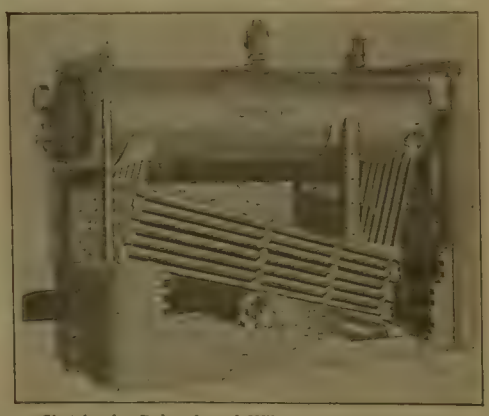
In these days of utilitarian education, when the learning of Greek is condemned as a waste of time, it is given to but a few to read Homer's enthralling poem in the original. Great then must be our gratitude to Mr. Church for all that he has done to reproduce for us these attractive tales in the true spirit of the original.

In language eminently suited to the theme, at once simple and dignified, he tells how, after the capture of Troy, the hero wandered over the Mediterranean with his little band of

followers in his endeavour to return to his beloved wife Penelope and his sea-girt kingdom of Ithaca.

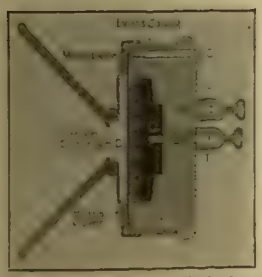
How he escaped from the rage of Polyphemus, the wiles of Circe, Calypso, and the Sirens, and the terrors of Scylla and Charybdis may be read in the pages of this delightful book. We cannot imagine a more charming or acceptable Christmas gift. The illustrations are in excellent taste and worthy of the letterpress.

How It Works. By Archibald Williams.—(Thomas Nelson and Sons. 3*s.* 6*d.*)—A certain number of people take no interest whatever in mechanical subjects; but we should imagine that they constitute a very small minority of the general public. It is therefore only reasonable to suppose that a warm welcome will be accorded to this latest volume from the pen of Mr Williams, who is already well-known to our readers. "How It Works" deals with many forms of apparatus such as one uses in everyday life, or to which one is at least indebted for many of the comforts of existence. We should expect to find—and we do find—accounts of mechanisms operated by steam and electrical power, which are treated lucidly and in detail. But the scope of the book is wide enough to embrace things so various as telescopes, water-wheels, threshing



Sketch of a Babcock and Wilcox Water-tube Boiler.

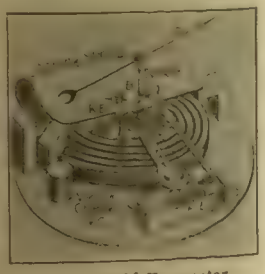
machines, and watches,—to name but a few items of a very long list. The photographer learns how a lens is adapted to his purpose. The householder may study the pages dealing with water-heating systems, and gas- and water-meters, filters and taps. For the musician there are two good chapters on the acoustic principles underlying stringed and wind instruments. The cyclist is remembered in a chapter devoted to gears, free-wheels, and change-speed mechanisms. Any one who has a taste for railway topics will extract a lot of information from the forty odd pages assigned to railway brakes and the working of points and signals, and so on. We are glad to see, by the way, that Mr. Williams has included, in appropriate places, those marvellous organs, the ear, the eye, the larynx and the heart.



The Granular Carbon Telephone Transmitter.

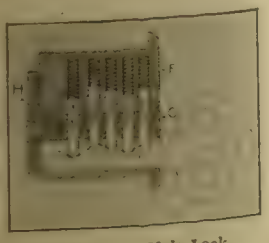
The book is rendered all the more valuable by the fact that it deals with principles as well as applications, and so serves as a stepping-stone to more specialised treatises.

The illustrations, some 240 in number, are peculiarly good. We append a few reduced examples. Many of the diagrams have the words printed boldly in the various parts of the mechanisms represented, so that the reader is spared the fatigue of the constant reference from illustration to text, such as would be unavoidable were figures or letters only used. An exhaustive index rounds off a volume which is extraordinarily good value for the money. "How It Works," though most instructive, is no cut-and-dried treatise. Any one who peruses it carefully will find his knowledge of things mechanica greatly extended, without experiencing the least boredom.

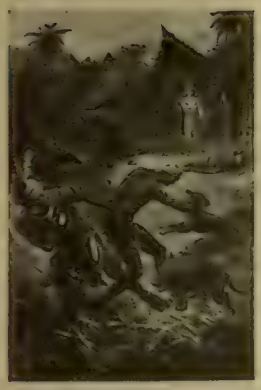


The Aneroid Barometer.

The Romance of Missionary Heroism. By John C. Lambert, M.A., D.D.—(Seeley and Co. 5*s.*)—It is sometimes said that the missionary is the forerunner of the soldier. There may be some truth in the saying, but it certainly is not the missionary's fault. It is, on the contrary, an indication of the value of his pioneer work and civilising influence. A Livingstone, for the sake of his Divine Master, plunges into the depths of Darkest



Section of a Yale Lock.



Africa, discovers great lakes, mighty rivers, smiling plains and sky-piercing mountains. Commerce follows in his train, and the country, now seen to be a new and desirable realm, excites the cupidity of some power, and annexation follows. Certainly, this last may not be an evil—indeed, where Britain is the annexer, it is generally beneficial. Its darker side is illustrated by the Belgian occupation of the Congo.

But the missionary goes to the ends of the earth not for diamonds or gold or territory or honour, but for Christ. That is his motive-power, and it carries him further than any other. The contents of the book literally come—

> From Greenland's icy mountains,
> From India's coral strand,
> Where Afric's sunny fountains
> Roll down their golden sand,

and the stories, many of them, are classics of heroism, devotion and self-forgetfulness. In this book the older stories are ignored. The newer and less known are told splendidly. Here we read the fine record of Neesima, Mackay, Hannington, Selwyn, Tamate (Chalmers), John Williams and John G. Paton.

St. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians ii. are alone adequate to describe these heroes: "In journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness." These men are God's heroes.

The Story of the Amulet. By E. Nesbit.—(Fisher Unwin. 6*s*.)—As the heroes and heroines of several books and a number of short stories, the Bastable children are already well known to a large public. In this, her latest book, Mrs. Nesbit allows us to share some more thrilling adventures of Cyril, Anthea and Co., who, thanks to the wonderful sand-fairy, the Psammead, and the possession of an ancient amulet—or, to be strictly correct, of part of one—are enabled to project themselves into the past and future. The "word of power" is spoken, a magic arch appears, the children join hands and walk through, to find themselves in Egypt of 6000 B.C., or Babylon, or Atlantis, or in the presence of Julius Cæsar, or on board a Phœnician ship. Once they get a taste of the future, wherein all things are ordered in a manner that must make the Socialist's mouth water to read of. Mrs. Nesbit has evidently taken great trouble to get her local colouring correct—she acknowledges the help of Dr. Wallis Budge, of the British Museum—and the result is eminently satisfactory, from both a literary and a picturesque point of view. The Babylonians, Egyptians, Phœnicians, &c., become live personalities, and we are deceived into feeling that we really have accompanied the children on their strange rambles. The humour of the young folk's conversation is delightful from its sheer simplicity, and the art which conceals art enhances the comicality of the dilemmas in which the amulet lands the

quartet and their friend, the Professor, who lives on the floor above and makes trips in their company. The book is unmistakably written for children, yet adults can read it with zest; and this is perhaps the best testimonial to its being one which the younger generation will enjoy. Excellent illustrations.

'Tention. By G. Manville Fenn.—(W. and R. Chambers. 5*s*.)—Mr. Fenn has chosen Spain at the time of the Peninsular War as the scene of his latest story.

Two young soldiers, Punch the bugler and Pen Gray, the youngest private in the Rifles, are separated from their regiment in a skirmish. Punch is severely wounded, so his com-

rade bravely remains with him and, in the face of great hardship and danger, nurses him back to health.

The pair wander about the country in a vain endeavour to rejoin the British Army. They are succoured by a peasant girl and a Spanish priest, who introduces them to a notable Spanish smuggler. They help to protect King Ferdinand from the French, and eventually find their way to the headquarters of the Duke of Wellington, by whom they are suitably rewarded. Pen Gray is made an officer and Punch a full private.

The story cannot be called interesting. The frequent conversations between the two boys, which constitute the greater part of the book, are extremely monotonous, while the plot is practically non-existent. Such incidents as these are could easily have been related in a couple of chapters instead of being spread out over four hundred pages. Mr. Sheldon's excellent illustrations do all that is possible to lighten the dulness of the story. The remarkable weight of the book does not add to its attractiveness.

Kidnapped by Pirates. By S. Walkey.—(Fredk. Warne and Co. 3*s.* 6*d.*)—Mr. Walkey keeps a full paint-pot and splashes on the colour (especially red) with a very thick brush. The resulting picture is as "bluggy" as the most sanguinary desperado of a reader could desire, but having said that, and added that the tale, thanks to a rapid succession of exciting and usually lurid incidents, gallops along at a rare pace, we have given all the praise we feel justified in bestowing.

There are indications that the author, if he would take the pains to take pains, could turn out a tale of adventure of no mean order. He certainly lacks neither imagination nor invention, though it is true his situations are mostly variants of those hallowed by tradition and adhered to with touching loyalty by the spinners of pirate yarns. He strikes us as having been so anxious to get the book over and done with that he was content to miss the achievement of a really good tale rather than be bothered with such irritating matter as plot-construction and character-drawing.

The incidents of the story, numerous and often picturesquely conceived, are loosely piled on top of each other without any sort of cohesion, while the *dramatis personæ* are conventional figures without distinction of any sort. We admit that the invention of a really novel pirate is a problem not easy of solution, but Mr. Walkey's buccaneers, with their gaudy clothes, armouries of knives and pistols, and weakness for strong drink, are stale as a sandwich in a railway station buffet.

With all its faults and missed opportunities, however, we can readily imagine that "Kidnapped by Pirates" will provide many readers, less exacting than ourselves, with several breathless hours of fearful joy. And if Mr. Walkey ever succeeds in curbing his imagination sufficiently to allow of careful authorship, we shall look for his work with undisguised interest.

Young Pickles, by Stuart Wishing (Ward, Lock and Co. 3*s.* 6*d.*), is a book that the ordinary healthy schoolboy will revel in. It breathes the very atmosphere of school. It is written in the words a schoolboy would choose, and is in consequence at times, even in the language, provocative of laughter. But the incidents described are sometimes too funny for words. The nigger entertainment, for instance, with young Vaughan's stump speech and the interruptions, the song he sings of his own composition, and the row which followed, are described most humorously.

The launching of the school magazine, *The Termly Thunderer*, caused as much sensation as when Mark Twain, as a boy, edited a weekly edition of the —— journal. The unfortunate editors were interviewed after the same fashion. The reader of this book, be he boy or grown-up, is certain of a hearty laugh.

The Treasure Trail, by Frank L. Pollock (David Nutt. 6*s*), presents us with a goodly array of villains, but also with a hero who has a public school sense of honour, and a charming heroine; a heroine who has pluck. The hero, Elliott, gets mixed up with the treasure seekers by doing a kindness to a man

called Bennett, who, as a stowaway in the *Clara Mellay*, discovered among the cargo some cases of solid gold bricks. Hunger had led Bennett to open one of these cases, which were marked with the stencil of a Chicago brand of corned beef.

Either with intention or by accident, the mate of the *Clara Mellay* ran her ashore in the Mozambique Channel. In doing so, he lost his life, and was personated by a missionary, the father of the heroine Margaret, who was one of the few saved from the wreck. The missionary knew about the gold which was being carried, and, divining that it might be salvaged, saw no reason why he should not profit by the knowledge. But there were others who were interested in finding the wreck — those who had stolen the gold from the Treasury at Pretoria!

The story deals with the adventures of the rival treasure seekers. Margaret, who had a plan left her by her murdered father, went with Elliott's party, in spite of all opposition. "I can outride you. I can out-shoot you," she says. "I am as fit as any of you." She proved her words. We will not spoil a good yarn by revealing the outcome of this perilous quest. The story is one which ought to delight boys.

The Romance of Animal Arts and Crafts. By H. Coupin, D.Sc., and John Lea, B.A.—(Seeley and Co., Ltd. 5*s.*)—In the days of our boyhood, when all the popular natural history books were written by the Rev. J. G. Wood, we had "Homes without Hands," and in recent years Frédéric Houssay, a Frenchman, gave us "The Industries of Animals." The present book is on similar lines, but with more modern instances and more reliable work than that of Mr. Wood. It deals with the marvels of architecture, mining, weaving, basket-work, spinning, carpentry, masonry, engineering, agriculture, pottery, tailoring, &c., practised by animals of the most diverse kinds as ordinary processes of their struggles for existence. "Fairy Tales," it may be said. Yes, fairy tales; but fairy tales of science, many of them to be verified by a little careful observation in present-day Britain among our mammals, birds, and insects. Our authors have done their work well, writing in plain, non-technical language, and grouping their examples under suitable headings. Thus, in the chapter devoted to carpenters, we have the methods of woodpeckers, macaws, carpenter bees, wood-boring beetles, carpenter ants, sawflies, white ants, ship-worms, and so forth. The illustrations are very unequal, and are too few for such a book. The drawings of Lancelot Speed are beautiful; some of the others are—not. The figures of the Stickleback facing page 102 are libellous.

The City at the Pole. By Gordon Stables, R.N.—(James Nisbet and Co. 3*s.* 6*d.*)—In his latest story Mr. Stables has utilised the not altogether new idea of a mysterious city situated in the volcanic regions about the North Pole. Douglas Grant, a young Scotch medical student, who is spending his vacation in helping his father on his farm, makes the acquaintance of a wealthy German scientist, called Schmerdermann, and offers him true Scottish hospitality. The acquaintance ripens into friendship, and eventually Douglas and his sister Amy accompany the German on his expedition to discover the Pole. They sail as far as possible in the good ship *Charles' Wain*, and then, after an unsuccessful attempt to advance over-land, embark on a submarine specially constructed by Schmerdermann for the purpose. After many vicissitudes the little party arrive at the Polar Kingdom of Volcania ruled over by one McThooselah an old Scotch sailor, who had been lost on a former expedition. Volcania is full of surprises and scientific interest. The natural supply of electricity is utilised in many wonderful ways, while in the outlying districts they find various antediluvian animals such as dragons and pterodactyls. After sojourning a year in this strange region they return with McThooselah to Scotland and presumably live happily ever afterwards. The story is readable, but we think Mr. Stables is capable of better work. The characters are too sketchy and fail to grip the interest of the reader, while the whole tale lacks cohesion. Mr. Pearse has provided some excellent illustrations.

In Search of El Dorado. By Alexander Macdonald.—(Fisher Unwin. 5*s.*)—The personal note in adventure stories invariably adds to the reader's interest, and Mr. Alexander Macdonald, in drawing upon his own experiences for the subject-matter of this book, considerably

enhances its attractiveness. His search for El Dorado was a personal search, conducted over vast areas in divers parts of the world, for he and his companions—each one a *beau ideal* of the loyal, honest Scot—chased the gilded phantom wherever the wilderness called. Amongst the snows and glaciers of the Klondike; the sand, centipedes and spinifex of Westralia; the salt-pan plains of Queensland; the fever-tainted scrubs of New Guinea and the more salubrious gum-diggings of New Zealand, the author, the indomitable Mac, and the fearless Stewart, faced difficulties and dangers with the true *sangfroid* of the born explorer. How they shot the White Horse Rapids, with which our readers are already acquainted, on their way to the Klondike, makes a thrilling tale, while the return journey, when they battled with blizzards to force a way through to win relief for the starving miners, ranks with the best thing in the book. From Alaska to Australia is a far cry, and not only the atmosphere changes as the reader accompanies the redoubtable three through the dry, sandy flats of Westralia as participants in the "Five Mile Rush." They strike gold there and add a fourth member to their interesting little party, a gentleman who tries mining in a stand-up collar and a tail coat, and finds by experience the advantages of primitive attire. When their claim is worked out, they start away for unknown territories, encountering wild blacks, extinct volcanoes, rubies and adventures galore. Thereafter the quest of the opal in the back blocks of Queensland and New South Wales occupied the insatiable energies of the adventurers and forms the basis of many entertaining pages, though a colonial may sometimes pause to overhaul his geographical memory and wonder what a willy-willy was doing so far out to the east. In describing his New Guinea experiences the author makes a slip in giving Germany credit for annexing a portion of the island about the time of the Moresby incident. Germany came in when the Imperial Government refused to ratify the Queensland annexation in the middle 'eighties. The book is capitally illustrated.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS.

The Chums. By John Hassall. (T. Nelson and Sons, 3*s*. 6*d*.) This is an original kind of book. Two cousins, Regge Wynne and Billy Grove, keep an account of their sports for a whole year in a tattered exercise book. The entries, numbering two per month—one in the handwriting, of each chum—describe hare-and-hounds, snow men, golf, fishing, tennis, croquet (yes!), cycling, cricket, bathing, shooting, hunting (rats included), and football. The illustrations, being by Mr. Hassall, are of course first-class. *The Wonder Book*. (Ward, Lock and Co., 3*s*. 6*d*.) The latest issue of this picture annual maintains the usual standard of excellence. It is a gold mine of charming illustrations and letterpress such as appeals to children in and out of the nursery. A splendid present. *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. (T. Nelson and Sons, 1*s*.) An abridged edition of this evergreen story. The type is large and clear, and the four full-page illustrations in colour, as well as the numerous black-and-white sketches, are excellent. This will delight the youngster's heart.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

We have also received copies of the following: *Roger the Bold*. By Captain F. S. Brereton. 6*s*. *With Roberts to Candahar*. By Captain F. S. Brereton. 5*s*. *With Clive in India*. By G. A. Henty. 3*s*. 6*d*. *With Gordon at Khartoum*. By Eliza F. Pollard. 2*s*. 6*d*. *To Greenland and the Pole*. By Gordon Stables. 3*s*. (Blackie and Son, Ltd.) *King by Combat*. By Fred. Whishaw. 3*s*. 6*d*. *Monitor at Megson's*. By Robert Leighton. 3*s*. 6*d*. *Follow My Leader*. By Talbot Baines Reed. 3*s*. 6*d*. *The Wolf-Men*. By Frank Powell. (Cassell and Co., Ltd.) *Firelock and Steel*. By Harold Avery. 5*s*. *Play the Game*. By Harold Avery. 3*s*. 6*d*. *The Fen Robbers*. By Tom Bevan. 2*s*. 6*d*. *The Magic Beads*. By Harold Avery. 1*s*. (T. Nelson and Sons.) *Grit and Pluck*. By W. C. Metcalfe. 5*s*. *Rather a Scapegrace*. By Mrs. Neville Cubitt. 2*s*. 6*d*. *Henri Duquesne*. By the Rev. E. E. Crake, M.A. 1*s*. (S.P.C.K.) *Young England*, vol. xxvii. 5*s*. *The Child's Own Magazine*. 1*s*. (The Sunday Union.) *One of Clive's Heroes*. By Herbert Strang. (Hodder and Stoughton. 2*s*. 6*d*.)

NATURALISTS' CORNER.

Conducted by EDWARD STEP, F.L.S.

Snakes.—L. C. Crocombe (Harlesden) has been reading an account of the South African Egg-eating Snake (*Dasypeltis scabra*), and wishes to know if it is rare, and whether it can be purchased in London. He also asks for information *re* the establishing of a small snakery and the best subject to start it with. The *Dasypeltis*, which is one of the smallest of the snakes, is, I believe, not rare. It could be seen in the Reptile House at the Zoo not long ago, and is probably still there. I do not know what would be the price of a specimen; but if L. C. C. were to pay a visit to Green's Aviaries, Covent Garden Market, he might find it on sale there. They have always a number of species of snakes on view, and, if they have not the one he wants, would probably get it for him, and tell him beforehand what it would cost. A covered aquarium (minus the water) such as he describes would serve admirably as a "snakery." He should cover the floor with clean gravel, put in a small pan of water, and a little bundle of dried moss. I agree with him that the English Grass-snake would be the best species to begin with. I am afraid that live frogs are a necessary part of the Grass-snake's diet when kept in confinement; but I do not understand his statement that he "has no possible means of obtaining them." There are plenty of ponds and fields within easy reach of his home where they may be caught, or the same dealers that supply him with the snakes will furnish the frogs.

Woodlice.—"Enquirer" (Glasgow) is much troubled by an invasion of Woodlice or "Slaters" in a conservatory and vinery, whence they make their way to the dwelling-house; and asks how to get rid of the nuisance. There are several species of Woodlice, but the commonest is *Oniscus asellus*. They are not insects, as usually regarded, but crustaceans—allies of the crab and lobster. They must have a damp atmosphere to live in, and are fond of decaying woodwork for their homes. If there is such about his conservatory, or any other decaying vegetable matter, he should clear it away and he will have done something towards getting rid of the nuisance. Such substances form their principal food, but they also gnaw and disfigure tender portions of plants and their flowers, and often entirely destroy seedlings. He should stop up holes and remove any material under which they can shelter; and he should set traps for them. These may consist of hollow stems of dead plants, slices of fruit, or fleshy vegetables, laid near their haunts and covered by a tile or piece of wood. If these are examined frequently, the Woodlice will be found feeding, and may be destroyed. A band of tar painted along the base of the walls will prevent their rising to the staging.

Water Tortoise.—G. A. Cattley (Ealing) should see answer to his neighbour J. T. in the November CAPTAIN. If kept in an indoors aquarium protected from frost it will probably remain active; or it may be so arranged in a vivarium that it has the choice of shallow water and of burying itself in cocoa-nut fibre.

Wasps and Flies.—Ione Vince (Saffron Walden) watched a wasp walking up a window-pane, and repeatedly catch a fly, roll it into a ball, and drop it, dead, on the window-sill. She asks, do wasps, like spiders, suck the blood of other insects when there is a scarcity of food, or was this an exceptional case? I wonder if my correspondent was very careful in her observation; because it does not quite agree with the facts as generally understood. Except late in the summer, when wasps develop a taste for ripe fruit, they spend their lives in catching insects, but not to suck their blood and throw the dry carcase away. Wasps are not blood-suckers. I have watched wasps during many years, and always observed that when they catch flies they first lop off the wings, and then fly with the body to the wasp-nest, where the fly is cut up and distributed in pieces to the wasp-grubs. The enormous numbers of wasps that came into our houses this September is testimony to the fact that the tribe had all through the fine summer

destroyed vast hosts of caterpillars and other insects, for without such food the workers could not have fed so large a family of brothers and sisters in the grub-stage—the ones that became full-fledged wasps in September. These had no such duties to perform, as they were the last brood of the year, and so they were free to spend their time in enjoyment, feasting upon ripe fruit, and trying to evade the onslaughts of the incensed housekeepers who naturally objected to their feeding from jam-dishes, &c. At such times the wasp makes itself an emphatic nuisance; but some of us foolishly ignore the invaluable aid it has given us for months in coping with far worse pests, which, unchecked by the wasps, would have ruined our gardens and allowed no fruit to ripen.

POLYPODY FERN.

Fern Queries.—F. E. N. (Highbury New Park), whilst at Sidmouth, found a fairly large Hart's-tongue fern, one frond of which had divided about half-way up, so that it had two tips. He asks, "Is this at all unusual or rare?" It is a very frequent occurrence in cultivation, and by no means unusual in the wild plant. The Hart's-tongue (*Scolopendrium vulgare*) is one of our most variable ferns, and quite a long list of variations has been recorded. In some the fronds are not content even with two tips, but develop four or five, and each of these again divide. It is apparently due to excessive vigour, for most of such specimens have long, broad fronds. Several other of our native ferns similarly run into varieties, and, of course, some people consider them far more beautiful than the normal fronds. If you grow that Hart's-tongue you will probably find next year that it will have several of its new fronds divided. E. Barnes (Wandsworth) found a fern growing in what he considers a strange situation—on an oak about seven feet from the ground, where the bole divided into four or five large limbs. The fern was growing in a sheet of interlaced creeping stems, which were covered by shaggy golden-brown scales, and many of the fronds hung in a half-drooping attitude. He wishes to know the name of the fern, and whether the situation is at all usual. The fern whose habit he so well describes is the Common Polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*), one of the most hardy of our native ferns. Although it is, perhaps, more frequently observed in old hedgerows—where the fronds often attain a much larger size—in some districts it is quite a common ornament in the forking of oak-trees. Sometimes it may be found on the vertical face of the tree, throwing its fronds out horizontally.

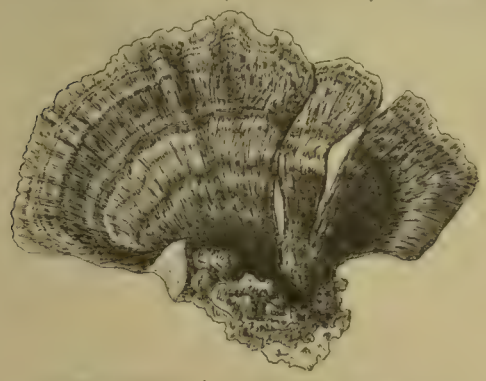
Banana Caterpillar.—G. E. S., on peeling a banana, found a small caterpillar feeding between the fruit and the skin. It has since grown to a considerable size (*see* illustration), and he submits it to me for identification. The banana is believed to have been one of the Canary variety. I am sorry that my knowledge of foreign caterpillars is not sufficiently extensive to enable me to say what its name is, but I will try to rear it to the winged condition, and if successful will report the result at a later date. It will probably turn out to be either *Prodenia littoralis*, or the Scarce-bordered Straw (*Heliothis armigera*). The latter moth occurs in this country, as well as in most other parts of the world, and with us the caterpillar usually feeds upon Rest-Harrow. It certainly agrees well with the description of the caterpillar of *Heliothis*, and probably it will so turn out.

BANANA-EATING CATERPILLAR.

Cage Birds.—Molly Vaughan (Neath). Feed your chaffinch on rape and linseed, and in spring give a little crushed hemp. It should also be supplied with green meat in the form of groundsel, lettuce, apple and so forth. It will also appreciate a few "ants' eggs" or mealworms occasionally. The bullfinch should have similar fare to the above-named, with the addition of pine-seeds, ash-seeds, beech-nuts, haws, watercress, &c. When moulting, place a rusty nail in the drinking water and give "ants' eggs." The birds will become tame if you gradually accustom them to your presence, but do not at first remain too near the cage if your presence causes wild fluttering. There is no charge for advice in this or any other Corner of THE CAPTAIN—the O. F. out of the largeness of his heart retaining the services of

his staff of experts solely that readers may have free advice in their difficulties.

Locusts.—I have to express my thanks to "Cliftonian" (Braamfontein, S.A.) for sending



A STUMP FUNGUS (POLYSTICTUS VERSICOLOR).

me a long article from one of the Johannesburg papers discussing the best means by which the State should deal with this serious evil which threatens Transvaal agriculture.

Land Tortoise.—W. N. Madan (Bristol) says he has read my hints on Tortoise-keeping, and then proceeds to show that he has acted contrary to part of them, as thus: "I have put the Tortoise in a large box of earth in the greenhouse. Is this the best thing to do, please? and do they require food during the winter months, as they do not appear to want to burrow?" Why does he put it in the greenhouse when he has a walled garden for it to range in, where it can select a suitable place for temporary burial? If he leaves rose-trees in the garden they will throw off their leaves and go to rest for the winter, but if he takes them into the artificial conditions of the greenhouse they will not want to rest. The animal is at least as susceptible to changed conditions as the plant. With regard to the eggs—when the tortoise means business in her egg-laying, she buries them and leaves them to their fate. They do not hatch until many months later. In this country they will probably not get sufficient continuous sunshine to hatch them. They might be placed in the greenhouse, but I do not think W. N. M. is likely to hatch them.

Questions of Identity. — "Lepidop" (Stamford Hill) sends me a sketch and description of a large butterfly, and asks for its name, &c. It is brown in colour with pale fawn and purple markings. It was given to "Lepidop" by a friend, and he has no idea where it was caught. It is a female specimen of *Hypolimnas bolina*, and it was in all probability caught in the neighbourhood of Durbunga, in Northern India; and possibly brought to this country by a British soldier who was stationed there. "Lepidop" also encloses "a small piece of herbage found this August growing on a hawthorn at Niton, I.W. Is it a parasite?" No; it is one of the Lichens which, though often popularly regarded as parasites, are not, as they obtain their nourishment entirely from the atmosphere. This one is known as *Evernia prunastri*, from its common occurrence on stems of Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). I wonder boys do not collect the Lichens. There are great numbers of them; many of them are very beautiful, and their preservation is a very simple matter—in fact, they preserve themselves. Another recommendation is that they are chiefly in evidence during the winter months, when there is little else to be got.—"Jacob" (Banstead) sends me one of the corky fungi, of which he says great numbers were growing on the stump of a felled tree. It is *Polystictus versicolor*, a common species to be found in abundance on old stumps and posts. Our drawing shows the velvety upper side zoned in various tints of brown, purple, grey, and yellow. The underside is white, pierced with thousands of minute tubes in which the microscopic spores are produced.

LICHEN (EVERNIA PRUNASTRI).

THE INFORMER

A PUBLIC SCHOOL STORY.

By FRED SWAINSON.

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell.

SYNOPSIS.

Dick Erpingham, an athletic, good-looking fellow, comes rather mysteriously to Harford, a big public school, at the age of eighteen. He has the cut of a public school man, but will not vouchsafe any information as to his antecedents. By saving a fag, Bob Leaf, from drowning, Erpingham makes the acquaintance of the teller of the story, Firmin, a cripple, and the two become great friends. Harford's idol and celebrity is Jim Mordaunt, a brilliant bat and wicket-keeper who has been played for his county. Dr. Forder, the Head Master, suspects Mordaunt of having attended a race-meeting, and as Erpingham (who had been up to London for an examination) was a passenger in the train by which Mordaunt must have returned, the Head asks him whether he saw Mordaunt in the train. This after Mordaunt had denied having been to the races. After a momentary hesitation Erpingham admits that he saw Mordaunt in the race-train. Mordaunt then confesses that he did attend the races, and it is feared that he will be expelled, but that night Erpingham has an interview with the Head Master, and on the morrow Mordaunt, to the unbounded relief of the school, is merely deprived of his monitorship. Erpingham, for his share in the matter, is "cut" by everybody in the school except Firmin and Bob Leaf. By the instrumentality of a charming girl named Yolande Yorke, who lives near the school, Bob Leaf learns that Erpingham was previously at Stonehurst, a public school of the same standing as Harford. Firmin and the fag of course keep this knowledge to themselves. When the term lists are published, Firmin, to his delight, finds that he has come out second in the Sixth, being beaten only by Wren, the school captain. Jim Mordaunt, on the other hand, has dropped to a very low place, and it is easy to see that it is his association with Kent, an "undesirable," that has largely been responsible for this degrading drop. At the end of the term one other fellow has come over to Erpingham's side, and that is Wren.

CHAPTER XI.

AGAINST TIME.

I PASS over as not belonging to this history our Speech Day, when young Anson played "something of Raff's," a great honour, and his mamma and Yolande beamed upon him from the room; when Jim Mordaunt went up to take his prize for French—he spoke the tongue as well as his own Anglo-Saxon—when the hurricane of cheers dwarfed the welcome given to any one else and Forder's face set more grimly as he handed him the book without a word, good or bad; when we all got our deserts, more or less, in the shape of fat leather volumes and thick medals lying heavily on their satin beds; when Leaf took the Fourth Form history prize, the guerdon of some reading done on wet halfers and solitary evenings when Crosse's juniors had passed the time more pleasantly if less profitably; and the jolly tea in my room, when the mater and Kate fenced lightly with the willing Dick, and gave him an invitation to spend the Lord's week-end with us in town; and finally the grief of Mrs. Anson when she found that mater had forestalled her, and Erpingham, the saviour of beloved Arthur, was already booked.

Dick was no end cheerful at the outcome of his examination and his position on the Fifth Form list, but by now the habit of study had

bitten into him and success did not make him slacker on our Arts programme. We plodded on just as hard as ever.

That year's Lord's, of course, is old history now," but a brave story cannot die of age." Luck was against us all through. Our friends the enemy ran up a score that looked to make them safe enough, and we were always fighting an up-hill fight. Wren's expresses did not pay against the first half-dozen bats, and Kent had to pitch them up to be hit, and though his slow, seductive, cunning ball sooner or later was lifted once too often into the outfield, he was expensive—ruinously expensive thought we as we perspired where we sat. Jim's keeping was glorious. Never had he seemed so safe, so certain, so cool, as on that broiling first day, so calm as when for one dreadful quarter of an hour our bowling was tied up into knots and an awful flogging seemed our only prospect. The wild clamour of our foes did not move him an iota: though ten men might be in panic throes he did the right thing inevitably, and when he fielded an abominably wild over of Parsons', overpitched on the leg, as though he were sending back Kent's gentle subtleties, his coolness reacted on Harfordians, and Wren took charge of the game again. Jim's influence over his fellows was as palpable as Forder's over his beloved Sixth.

Kate said to Dick: "Mordaunt doesn't throw wildly, does he?"

I heard Dick say, almost fiercely: "Mordaunt is worth the other ten. Cricket is in his blood."

Our bad time ended when Wren went on for the second time. He rattled down the stumps in his first over, and this long-deferred success knit together our tangled field. Somehow, when that sixth wicket fell and Morcombe was going back to the pavilion amid the roars of his school and the twirling of sunshades, it seemed natural for our fellows to gravitate towards Jim as he chatted with the umpire who was building up the shattered stumps. Wren throve on his first success. His bowling had a sting and a bite it had seemed to lack before; the extra bit of pace, the extra dash of "devil," came out of the captain's reserve. There was no pulling the ball off the middle now. The bat's face and nothing else, or a saddened walk back to the pavilion. Kent took up the ball again at the other end, and now that Wren was fairly in his stride, Bill was too old a bird to give anything away. His length was irreproachable.

"Downy bird, Kent, Dick," I said, as we watched Bill through half a dozen overs. "'You get 'em out, Wren, and I'll see they don't score.'"

"That's what he's saying, Frank. Kent has a head to him."

"How slow he seems!" said Kate, who doesn't know as much cricket as she fancies she does.

"Slow but sure, Kate, you know."

"I've heard that somewhere before—ages ago, Frank," said Kate, yawning over my platitude.

"Well, that's Kent," said I, but I was thinking of things other than cricket just then.

The last man came in, a big brawny collegian, and it was plain in a couple of balls just what he could do. He could smite, and he had no reputation as a bat to keep up. He despatched Wren once, twice, thrice to the boundary. How they cheered! How nervously we rubbed our moist palms together!

Kent served him up irreproachable balls, and Smith found he had to play them. They couldn't be slogged unless he went out to them. He got impatient under the treatment.

"Kent's wicket, this, Frank," said Dick, glowing.

"Next over," said I, nodding.

"Downy bird, Kent, Dick," said Kate, mincing my slang at the end of her lips.

Three out of Wren's next over went crashing through our field, and we sighed—I speak for Dick and myself—for Bill to take the ball again.

Three slow, unhittable balls, and then we saw the slogger go out, exactly as we fancied he would. The ball was a yard shorter and yards faster; a mighty swipe, a clean miss, and Jim had the bails off in a twinkling. How our fellows roared!

"Downy bird, Kent, Kate," said Dick, sweetly; and we three laughed and cheered as the Harfordians went into the pavilion.

As I said before, luck was against us all through. Harford had some batting when they were hot and tired and fagged. Runs came, of course, but no fellow stayed in long enough to get his eye in. Jim, as usual, played perfectly, and just why Milligan ran him out when he had made twenty-nine and there wasn't above a quarter of an hour to go, remains a mystery—a mystery compounded of nerves and anxiety, for our game was to go slow then and come out fresh and strong in the morning. But we streamed out of Lord's, and were whirled away down Baker Street and other devious ways (mostly four in a cab), knowing that our four best wickets were down and not a hundred on the board. Milligan confesses he had a bad night. And on the morrow, before lunch, though our tail wagged very merrily indeed, we were all out, and the total was woefully smaller than theirs. However, Wren was

on the mark this time, and Bolton met with the success denied him in the first innings. They felt the bitterness of hoping for the "stand" that never came, just as we had done the day before. When the last man, our burly friend the smiter, was out to a particularly venomous yorker, first ball, from Wren, the crowd knew that this match was not going to be the usual draw. We had time to win if—and Harfordians were in a big funk over the if—if we could make the runs—two hundred and ninety-nine, to be precise.

How we roared when Wren and Jim came out! We put our very soul into our shouts, our hopes against our fears. The captain looked solid and good enough, and Mordaunt—well, as Dick said, cricket was in his blood, and as the first ball was deflected for four—a first ball treated on its merits, and how rarely one is, you know—we saw that Jim was not affected by the strain that worried us.

Dick had beckoned me slily to his side, and Kate and mater had to be content with such conversation as brother Jack served up. "Remember, Dick," I asked, "how you wanted to see Jim make runs against the clock?"

"Don't I, Frank!"

"Well, I think you have a first-rate chance this afternoon."

"Look at the difference between them," murmured Dick. "Wren's groping his way in and wondering what he's going to run against next."

"And Jim?" said I, for I was never tired of hearing my friend murmuring praise of my old friend. He admired him with an admiration born of knowledge, and that is the best, isn't it? Stonehurst, I felt sure, had missed Dick on its green fields.

"Mordaunt had the measure of 'em yesterday, Frank. That cut ran off his bat like quicksilver, didn't it? This *is* cricket."

Kate caught our murmuring, and I sent her a wintry smile. Kate can fence prettily with her tongue, wears pretty frocks, and is as pretty as any of her many friends, but my smile said:

"All your charms, my pretty sis, can't stand against decent cricket. Erpingham is very busy, you see; too busy to talk to girls."

It was delightful to watch the Harfordians flitting from wicket to wicket; to see the bowling treated on its merits, bad balls smashed, the good saluted and respected. Wren was getting more fluent every ball, and when one over was treated mercilessly there was a double change, whereat Harfordians turned to one another and beamed. Mordaunt went on, as usual, calm and confident; but Wren slowed down again until he had the hang of the change when that pleasant flit-flit and cross-cross began again.

"What do you think, Dick?"

"They're set. There's no particular reason why they shouldn't go on until further orders."

"Well, eighty, without damage," said I, beginning to crow—a rotten thing to do in that king of games—"isn't bad. Eugh! what's that?"

"Wren's out," said Dick, as third man threw up the ball amid the deafening roar of his friends, "and there's no mistake about it either. Wren should have left that alone."

We cheered Wren, for he had given us heart, but that mistimed ball was the signal for Harfordian disasters. Bolton, Parsons, Gale, and Flood came out. Each "abode his destined hour and went his way" sorrowfully, and with every fresh disaster our spirits came down with a run. Milligan put fresh life into us: exactly as Wren had done, he groped his way in; exactly as Wren had done, he mis-hit a rising ball and the same long-armed third man sprang in air to hold it. His score was Wren's—thirty-two. And Jim all the time, when things were bright, when good bats were going out for miserable six's and seven's, was Harford's steady hope. He had the bowling weighed. Whether forcing them between cover and point, or flicking them daringly through the slips; whether he served up straight drives that went with a zip, or that lovely draw of his away to leg: his play was always safe. Not one bad stroke; not one brutal slog.

Cooper took Milligan's place, middle and leg and his departure. When his back was turned on the game our hopes vanished to zero. Harford knew only too well that Kent and Hargreaves were not played for their batting.

And now the clock began to enter into our hopes and fears. Up to Cooper's departure there had always seemed a reasonable prospect of runs being made by both bats, but now Jim would have to make them himself. Could he in the time? Would Kent and Hargreaves survive long enough to let him do it? Somehow, we never thought of Jim's being out.

The tense excitement held most in that immense crowd. We felt it around us, among us, in us. Bill coming out of the pavilion, trailing his bat, was the signal for the outlet of frantic cheers and counter cheers. Kent walked up to Mordaunt, and the friends said a few words. Then Bill turned away with a laugh and took middle.

"I know a fellow who's as cool as Mordaunt," said Dick, an unwilling admiration in his voice

'Shall we lose, Dick?" asked Kate across me and ignoring me for my wintry smile. "Just how do we stand, please?"

"Fifty-five runs to get and thirty minutes to get them, Kate. Mordaunt will have to make them in, and Kent and Hargreaves will have to keep in while he brings us home. The others will try to keep Mordaunt quiet and 'mobilise' on Kent and Hargreaves, who can't bat. Oh! the odds are against us."

"We might play for a draw, Kate," I chimed in.

"Another horrible draw," said Kate, furling her sunshade. "What a waste of two days!"

"We'll see in a minute, Kate," said Dick anxiously. "I fancy Wren's sent out word to Mordaunt to do as he thinks best."

"Then, Dick," said I, "if I know anything of Jim, you'll see him working against the clock."

"And that's the first," said Dick, as Jim stepped out and drove clean over the bowler's head. It was the first time he had skied the ball all day.

Harfordians saw Jim's game in a moment, and the others just as soon. How we cheered each crashing drive, each daring pull to leg, and that dazzling late cut. How they tried to muzzle him and "mobilise" on Bill!

But in finesse Kent was just in his element. When he had to take the bowling, which he took good care to avoid, he was as cool as Jim. Bill was no fellow to be unnerved in any crisis; he blocked, blocked, blocked; and when the last ball of the over went gently past the bowler, and Bill smiled serenely and stayed where he was, Harfordian laughter rolled across the field. Then Jim took up his merry tune again.

But why go on? That year's Lord's is in *Wisden's:* get it and see just how the match struck a cool outsider. The runs were knocked off with a quarter of an hour to go. When Jim came in with Bill alongside, the scene was a thing to remember lovingly all one's life. Think of it! One hundred and sixty-nine, not out, and the match won off his own bat!

As I recall that steady, polished innings: no hurry, no sloth, the waiting for the right ball, and the crisp, clean, inevitable runs, then the fierce flogging of good bowling, every stroke bringing victory nearer our grasp; as I think of his steady poise behind the wickets when Harfordians were demoralised; his coming off the field, the glow and flush of health on his cheeks; the utter absence of side when those massed thousands, friends and foes, rose at him: I am sure no English youth ever touched a greater triumph.

That was Jim Mordaunt at his brightest and best.

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CHAPTER XII.

HOW FORDER KNEW.

AFTER Lord's, affairs at Harford glided gently on, as they usually do, until that happy morning dawns when we pack up Harfordian garb, don, may I say, "civilian" clothes, and go north, south, east and west and are welcomed according to our deserts at the ancestral halls. The House Championship alone remains to be decided, but, in this story at least, that school event does *not* come in. Crosse's ran up against Forder's first round and were beaten, and the glorious uncertainty of the game was illustrated by the way. Forder's House, who carried it off, didn't put it just like this, of course.

The Second XI.s carried on a minor private tournament of their own, and just before it started, Rudge, who could bowl a bit, bat above a bit, and was a hard-working field, was drafted into Crosse's first, and could not, therefore, play for the second. (Inviolable Rule.) Crosse's juniors held a meeting, and King was proposed to fill the shoes of the worthy, if sulky, Rudge. Fawcett had worked for this end from the moment Mordaunt notified promotion to Edward.

King proved himself a "strong" man before his captaincy was five minutes old. He made a neat speech, mentioning his appreciation of the honour done him, winked at Fawcett genially, and then calmly announced: "I say, you fellows, I'm going to put Bob Leaf down for to-morrow against Harbour's."

"Oh! are you?" said Faulder, piping up at once.

"Jolly good idea, Tom," said Fawcett. "Now Rudge is out of the team, will any one tell me who's going to bowl?"

"We aren't going to have that rotter in our eleven, King, and so I jolly well tell you," barked Faulder.

"Will *you* bowl, old man?" asked King, suavely.

"Not as long as I'm alive to advise you, Tom," said Fawcett, with such marked fervour that Faulder scowled horribly.

"None of us will play if Leaf does," said Harris, from the back, as usual.

"That's all right, Harris," said Tom King, very gently indeed. "You *won't*, my boy."

"What!" said Harris, choking.

"I'm going to kick you out, right off."

"Ever heard of Fred Ince, Harris? He's little, but he sort o' freezes on to a catch," asked Fawcett.

"Oh! you pig, Fawcett," said Harris.

"My advice, Tom," went on Fawcett, with mock persuasion, to his chum, "is to give Freddy a trial. 'He's little, but he's wise. He's a terror for his size. Aren't you, Fred?'"

"Now, Rudge was a good man," said Tom, sending a friendly glance to Ted, who, silent as usual, listened to his successor's pointed comments on his reign, "and would have his own way—as a captain should."

"Hear, hear!" from young Ince; whereat a good few fags squeaked with delight.

"Yes," went on King—"er—as a captain should. Now, Ted, as captain, kicked out Bob and put in Harris. I'll kick out Harris and put in Bob. Sort of pass it round."

"Never could understand what Rudge saw in Harris," said Fawcett, contemplating that delirious gentleman with great intentness. "He can't play cricket, and—er—well, is he ornamental?"

"You can do what you like about Harris, King," said Robinson, "but we draw the line at Leaf. The fellow toadies to Erpingham."

"Hear, hear," said Faulder. "If Jim and Bill Kent had been kicked out of Harford, where should we have been on Saturday? We don't want Erpingham's little puppies."

"Pat, why don't you tell Bob Leaf all this?" cooed Fawcett. "Shall I?"

"You'd better not," said Faulder, hastily.

"Shut up, Phil," said King to his friend, "and you fellows had better make up your minds what you're going to do about Leaf. Think it over. I'll give you five minutes."

King sidled over to Rudge, and the pair, who at bottom liked each other, talked of Crosse's First XI. chances, alas! to be snuffed out so soon.

"We're nearly all agreed about Leaf, King," said Robinson; "we won't have him."

"Let's put it to the vote," said Fawcett, impatiently. "Those for Bob—miles the best bowler—hands up. Two. Thanks. Ince and Smith. And Tom and I—that's four. Against?" A score of hands went up, and Phil's comment was: "You silly cuckoos."

"Then, here you are," said Tom, resolutely. "I resign. You can do your best against Harbour's by yourselves. I'm sick of this rot of yours against Bob. He's cause to like that fellow Erpingham, if you and Mordaunt haven't. We want cricketers in our eleven, and if you're not going to let me have 'em, well, you can fill up with—any rubbish you like."

"You pig—King," murmured Harris.

"We don't want you to resign, Tom," said Robinson, troubled.

"Well, I mean what I say," said King resolutely.

"Bob may not care to play," cut in Phil, diplomatically, at this moment.

"No, I forgot that," said King, brightening. "Shouldn't wonder if he wouldn't. But, I say, let me ask him. You needn't speak to him, you know, though I shall all serene. Besides, now, can't he bowl? Don't we stand a good chance if he slings 'em down?"

Crosse's juniors began to weaken as their new captain raised roseate views of success before their mental vision. Then Phil brought off a brilliant stroke of diplomacy. He enlisted the silent Rudge, after some whispered eloquence. The ex-captain said, half surlily, "I'd give the beggar another chance, you fellows."

This carried the day. Crosse's, before their great need of a bowler arose—selfish pigs, you may say, in the words of Harris—agreed to sink their dignity and graciously avail themselves of Bob Leaf's help. "It will be all right," said Phil to Harris. "We'll all pass salt and mustard to Bob now. I always thought, Harris, that it was a rotten business to cut Leaf and let him kick you to fill in his spare time."

King, accompanied by Fawcett, went to Leaf, and found my young friend browsing over a novel in his little corner study. "Come to ask you, Leaf, if you'll turn out again for Crosse's?"

Bob brightened despite himself, but he said: "No, I'm hanged if I will! You kicked me out, you know, King."

"No, we didn't;" said Fawcett, amicably; "that was Faulder's gang who got at Rudge. Tom and I voted for you in the pav. all serene. Always said it was a mistake to cut you. Your shady friends are quite your own concern."

"They aren't shady, Fawcett. And before I did play I'd want an apology from Rudge."

"Why, Rudge is the very fellow who just now proposed to ask you, Leaf."

"Made a rattling speech," added Phil.

"I'm blowed if he did," said Bob, curtly. "Teddy couldn't if he tried."

"Oh! I meant for *him*," corrected Phil, glibly.

"But Rudge is out of the boat now, Leaf. Jim has chosen him for the last place in the First. I'm captain."

"Oh!" said Bob thoughtfully.

"And jolly well threatened to come out, old man, if you weren't to be asked. And Harris has been kicked out," added Phil.

"Pretty good of you, Tom," said Leaf. "I think I'll play. Whom are we playing? Harbour's?"

"Yes, to-morrow. You'll turn out, then, Bob? Thanks awfully."

"To-morrow," said Bob. "Look here, Tom, I'd promised to go up the river, but if I can get out of it I will. I'd like to get among Harbour's lot——"

hear that he was in smooth waters again with his fellows.

"Are you going up river?" asked Bob, rather diffidently.

"Yes!"

"Well, Firmin, would you leave a book for Jolly Yorke in their boathouse? Stick it on the shelf where the paint-pots are. She'll get it when she comes down after tea."

"All right," said I. "What's the book?"

"Half a moment, Firmin," said Leaf, beaming, as he went to fetch it. It was Dixon's "Birds."

"COME TO ASK, LEAF, IF YOU'LL TURN OUT AGAIN FOR CROSSE'S?"

"Try to, Leaf," said King earnestly, "and keep yourself clear after to-morrow, anyhow. You're jolly decent to turn out after all."

"That half-Coventry business didn't worry me much," said Leaf, laughing. "I've really had a ripping time—heaps of fun. But cricket will come as a pleasant change."

Perhaps the foregoing will explain why, when I asked Bob if he cared to come up the river with me on the morrow and fish, he said he was playing for Crosse's Second against Harbour's. I told him I was awfully pleased to

On the morrow, a blazing hot day, I deserted Dick. I pulled in at Yorke's boathouse, and, instead of finding only the deserted punt, the fat dinghy, and the polished pair-oar, I found Yolande stretched along her red fluffy cushions, blinking across the glittering water, her chin cupped in her palms as usual. She was nut-brown with the sun.

"Is that you, Frank? How jolly! How's Dick Erpingham?"

"Working hard, Yolande. Bob sent you this book. I was to put it among the paint-pots."

"Has he got it already? How nice of him! Oh! do come in. Wait while I push away the dinghy. Fishing? Well, just ten minutes."

I drew up, and she stepped into my skiff and sat in the stern.

"I saw you at Lord's, you know, you and Erpingham. Wasn't Mordaunt glorious?"

"And Kent," said I.

"Of course, but Mordaunt—! I nearly screamed when we won, and I smashed mother's sunshade and tore my handkerchief into shreds. Wasn't it exciting?"

"I was in an awful funk, myself. We ran it a trifle too close."

"Ah! but we won!" crowed this nut-brown maid, as if she had been in "the glorious victory" herself. "What a time since I'd seen Mordaunt bat! We haven't been on Meads all the year. The last time I saw Mordaunt was at Gleam station, when mother and I were going up to town. There was an awful crush, on account of some races somewhere, and Dr. Forder found us a carriage. I saw Mordaunt and Kent get into the race train and asked Dr. Forder where they were going to play cricket."

I stared at the girl beyond all excuse. I mastered my feelings, somehow, and said: "Go on, Yolande."

"Oh, there isn't any more, only Dr. Forder said: 'You've mistaken some one else for Mordaunt, Yolande;' and I said I was sure. As though any one could mistake Mordaunt, Frank!"

I found it difficult enough to chatter naturally at that moment to this frank, honest girl. So all those miserable days, to Dick, to Jim, to most of us; our shattered friendships; the knitting together in bonds of amity of Mordaunt and Kent; Bill's cool, steady hatred of my friend; Jim's fall from his high estate, to Harris's hacked shins — were the outcome of the cheerful rattle of an enthusiastic girl! I thought, I thought, I thought again, barely hearing a word of what she was saying.

In the end I found myself promising to call in the boathouse some half-holiday to identify her eggs, and when she had hopped back into her punt and had given me her friendly wave, I pulled out into the river and the sunlight, hardly believing I was awake.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONVERSATION IN A PUNT.

CROSSE'S Second XI. was in action while I was supposed to be having a lively time among the Hare's coarse fish, and when I returned from my disturbing interview with Yolande, I found Bob Leaf, flushed and beaming, sitting at the open window of my study.

"Got many, Firmin?" asked Bob, glancing at my creel.

"Nothing to speak of," said I, holding up my solitary chub, "and he's not in condition yet. Fact is, Bob, coarse fishing starts months too soon. They're ravenous, and not worth taking out."

"I like 'em like that," said Bob. "'Catch but eat not' is my motto with fish. Did you leave Jolly Yorke her book?"

"Yes," I said, "and I saw Jolly Yorke herself. I fancy she expected your coming, Bob."

"Did she?" asked Bob. "You told her just how it was, Firmin?"

"Oh! rather! I'm to go again before we cut for the holidays and try over her eggs."

"She's awfully keen about them, Firmin, isn't she? She's been worrying for the last month about colouring her white eggs—kingfishers', martins', &c. I told her I had never heard of it. She says she's read it somewhere, but I expect she dreamed it."

"You didn't tell her so, did you?"

"Of course I did, and that's made her keener than ever over it. There isn't such a thing, is there?"

"Oh, yes. She means the carmine dodge."

"Well, you show her how to do it when you look over her eggs, and she'll be your friend for life."

"Oh! then I will, Bob. What sort of a show have you been having against Harbour's?"

"Ripping!" trilled Leaf, as he fairly swelled out with the joy of the thing. "Tom put me on first, and I ran right through them. Eight for twenty-three, and seven for thirty-three. Not bad when I haven't had a ball in my hand for two months?"

"Jolly good," purred I. "You licked 'em, then?"

"I should think so. Innings and eighty-three."

"Make any?" I asked, rather diffidently, for Bob was chronically unlucky with the bat.

"Ah! didn't I just!" said Bob, almost crowing. "King put me in last but one. I knew it was no good trying to play according to Cocker, because I wasn't in practice, so I just lammed out at everything, fast or slow, like that fellow Smith at Lord's."

"It paid, Bob, then?"

"Moses! yes. Forty-two, Firmin, without a chance. Little Ince and I fairly galloped for the last wicket. And I say, Faulder and

Robinson owned up to Tom and Phil that they'd been idiots to keep me out so long. They stood me a tea at Baker's; twelve of us jammed round his biggest table. I've had a ripping time."

"Twelve?" said I, puzzled.

"Oh, Harris scored. That beggar will be as near the eleven as he can get. I thought he might doctor my analysis, but it was right to a run, and I would have jolly well soon let him know if it hadn't been."

"I see," said I. "Strikes me, Bob, you're doing very well this term. History prize, and out of the Lower Fourth when we come back, and dead in form at cricket."

"Oh! it's been a ripping term after all," said Bob.

"Well, keep it up, and you'll be in the Fifth in a brace of shakes."

Crosse's juniors, helped by the redoubtable Leaf, progressed merrily in their tournament, until Forder's were met in the final, when they had to bow the knee, and the Head's house annexed both championships, authorised and unauthorised. Bob was disconsolate when at five o'clock on the last Saturday, as Dick and I were having tea, he came into my study and announced the result. "They were too good, Erpingham: batted to the very end, and their bowling was steady as a rock."

"What was your average, Bob?" asked Dick.

"Four for forty-four, Erpingham; pretty rotten, isn't it?"

"Rhodes wouldn't think so," said Dick, smiling. "Have some tea, Bob. Last Saturday, you know, for us."

"You're not leaving, Erpingham?" asked Bob, blankly.

"Oh! dear no," said Dick, hastily. "I'm good for ages yet."

"That's all right," said Bob, drawing up with great relief, and casting a discriminating eye on our plentiful provender. "I'm going over to Yorke's after tea, Firmin, and taking Tom King and Phil."

"Tell Yolande that I'll come on Monday. Ask her when, will you?"

"All serene," said Bob.

"Who's the lady?" asked Dick.

"Anson's friend of the Aberdeen express, Dick," said I, laughing.

"You know her, then?" said he.

"I do now. I'm by way of being honorary consulting expert to her birds'-egg collection," said I, lightly.

Bob went on eating, but gave me just a quarter glance of intelligence.

"Didn't know you knew the girl, Frank," said Dick, simply.

"Oh! pretty well, Dick."

When we got to the school float I said to him: "Let's have a punt to-night, Dick. You'll have to do all the work, but you look so beastly fit that I don't mind if you do."

"Right. Up or down, Frank?"

"Up, please. Never rightly liked the look of the river near the bend, after young Anson was fished out from a watery grave by a complete stranger. I suppose you've forgotten it, Dick?"

"How can I, Frank, when a certain good-natured but prosy idiot is always bleating about it?" said Erpingham, flushing. "We'll have the old punt, Jones, and the biggest and downiest cushions you've got. Any particular place, Toothpick?" calling me by my cognomen, as he always did when I had chaffed him.

"Under the old oak; pray it isn't bagged as you go."

Under the old tree Dick thrust in, made fast the line to its fingers running down the bank into the warm waters, and taking his cushion laid his listless length supine, gazing up into the blue sky through the leaves trembling in a fitful July breeze. The swallows kept cutting across our quiet shelter, swifts swept up and down the shimmering river, water-hens nodded their way in and out of the reed beds just below us, and the merry bleak splashed and frisked and showed me their green and silver sides. Overhead some bird was tap-tap-tapping, and near we heard "the moan of doves in immemorial elms." The river at its very best.

We talked of things Harfordian, of Forder, of Mordaunt and Kent, of Wren, of our Arts exam.: all shop, bitter or sweet. "Reconciled to us now, Dick?" I asked, at length.

"Would be, Frank, only—well, I suppose one cannot forget that day at Gleam. I ache over that yet." He went on: "It's been discipline for me, and heaven knows I needed that, but what has it done for Mordaunt, Frank?"

I said nothing.

"Don't think Forder quite knows how to handle a fellow like Jim. He's just the sort for a stubborn fool like me, but Mordaunt—Do you know, I think it would have been better if Forder had sacked him."

I saw Dick's point. "Jim's rotting horribly. But I think all would come right yet if only Kent were out of the way. I funk Kent and his eternal smile, Dick."

"In a way I do, too. He never loses his temper. Pretty cruel beast, Kent, I should

think." Dick was silent for a minute or two, thinking, I know now, of his old school life at Stonehurst; then he said very quietly, so quietly that I barely heard him: "Frank, have you always been lame?"

"Always limped from my youth up, old man. It worries my people more than me, I'm sure."

Dick went on more lightly. "All the same, Frank, I've done what I came here to do—to work. It was horribly hard at first, harder perhaps than a high flyer like you thinks for, but—well, when you took me in hand over the over—worse luck. Our family party in Germany isn't supposed to be complete without me."

A skiff went by down river, and at the light dip of sculls I looked up. Mordaunt was sculling, and when he caught sight of us under our oak I heard him say: "Old Frank, Bill."

Kent turned round sharply and waved his hand in ironical greeting. Jim looked indifferently over his friend's head.

"I wonder, Dick," said I, as I watched them out of sight, "whether Lord's quite makes up to Jim for all he's lost at Harford?"

"I THINK IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF FORDER HAD SACKED HIM."

Arts I got into my stride. (And if it hadn't been for the work I'd have had to cut or gone mad.) Do you think Forder will give me my remove into the Sixth?"

"I'd say the odds were twenty to one on. But keep up a solid four hours a day all the holidays. *We* can't afford to slack over the Arts."

"I wish you were coming down to Westmorland with me, Frank. We'd take no end of care of you."

"I'd like it awfully, of course, but—well, that lake fishing you tell me about will have to stand

"I'd say not—if Mordaunt's what I think him," said Erpingham, thoughtfully.

"I'm sure not," said I.

CHAPTER XIV.

I INTERVENE.

MONDAY, the last day of this eventful term, came, and with it the final lists. Dick got his remove, as I had prophesied. I left him packing up and dismantling his study preparatory to doing

ditto for me when I should return from Yorke's. When I went up river I found Yolande awaiting me with her shallow boxes of eggs, and she displayed all her speckled beauties to my expert opinion.

Bob's climbing powers I am sure were in excess of his exact knowledge in the way of birds and their eggs, and I handed over, as the best way, a pencil and pocket note-book to Yolande, and told her to write *seriatim*, and I would arrange, in order.

"Where did you get this, Yolande?" I asked, pointing to a tiny blue egg.

"Out of a wall, Frank. I found that nest, Bob said it was a hedge sparrow's, and I remember I said it had mistaken the orchard wall for a hedge."

"It's a redstart's. Got Redstart?"

"It had a red tail," said the girl, immensely impressed. "Is it a good egg, please?"

"Pretty fair; the old bird, I expect, thought it was a jolly good one."

So I pattered on, taking away a name with my left hand and giving her another with my right. She gave up Bob's names lingeringly, as old friends, but gloated over new acquisitions. Thus "blackcap" became "black-headed bunting," "a little duck" became a "teal," a "dabchick's" became a "bald-headed coot's," a name that moved her to riotous laughter.

"Is the hen bird bald, too?"

"Oh! rather."

"And the young ones? Oh! fancy, young bald-headed coots!"

In the middle of our labours and laughter Mrs. Yorke and Agnes came in, and Yolande introduced me, a formality that regularised acquaintance with Miss Jolly Yorke. After all, one can't pay visits to boathouses and laugh with the daughter of the house without knowing at least another of the family circle.

"I have often seen you, Mr. Firmin, on Speech Day, and I have heard a good deal about you during the last ten weeks. What a library of prizes you must have!"

"Frank is Bob's—er—er—'master,' mother," said Yolande, mincing the title just as Kate would have done.

"Bob doesn't own any master, Mrs. Yorke—under Dr. Forder."

"No, I should think not. We all like Bob and his friends very much. I'm sorry you're all going to-morrow."

"So am I," said the girl, frankly. "I shan't laugh again until you all come back."

"We heard you, Yolande, up to the meadow hedge," said Agnes, "just now."

"Did you, Agnes?" said Yolande, unabashed. "Then that's my record. Have *you* ever seen a little bald-headed coot, Agnes?"

"No, indeed!" said Agnes, severely.

Yolande's laughter pealed out again, and for the life of me I couldn't help my own, and Mrs. Yorke joined in discreetly. As Bob had said, she was very like her daughter.

"That's further than the meadow hedge, Agnes, I think," said Yolande, with great content. "Now, Frank, once more."

We went on with our work, Mrs. Yorke and her niece chatting away in their deck chairs, now and then throwing in a word in our direction. When finally I had passed in review Yolande's collection, and explained how she could pink her white eggs with carmine and a blow-pipe—she listened to this hands to chin as usual—she called out from her note-book: "Mother, listen to my egging for this afternoon. All new. Teal, reed bunting, tree pipit, redstart, jay, wheatear, whitethroat, coletit, and bald-headed coot. Thanks awfully, Frank."

When I, ten minutes afterwards, prepared to take my leave, Mrs. Yorke asked me to come over next term and bring Erpingham with me. Yolande petitioned for German picture cards, and Agnes owned she collected, too; so, amid promises, I pushed out of the boathouse and sculled down stream, and the last I saw of my three friends was three separate handkerchiefs fluttering amicably from the boathouse.

I don't know what induced me to go to the Pool, a backwater cut out of the Hare (across whose placid bosom every Harfordian has to swim before he can take out a school boat), when I landed at the school float. I have often wondered since why I did, and have never come to any reasonable conclusion on the matter, and have often wondered also what might have happened had I not had that strange idea: something pretty bad, I am very sure. I passed through the wicket gate—and found Broad Pool apparently deserted, though I had expected to see some Harfordians having their last dip. The long line of sheds was empty, but I saw some towels on the far seat, which said that either some fellow had forgotten them or that he was about Broad Pool somewhere. I gave a glance round, and was just going out when I heard the sound of voices, pretty loud, too.

Almost immediately there followed a cry of pain, tremulous at first, but rising into a sharp, piercing cry. I was puzzled what to make of it, and I could see no one. Then came a defiant shout of: "*I won't tell you!*" and

AS KENT'S RIGHT HAND SHOT OUT, I RAISED MY CRUTCH.

another cry, which seemed much longer drawn out, and still another. I didn't like it at all, and was just beginning to hurry across to the far side to investigate, when, all at once, there was the sound of a scuffle, and before my astonished eyes I saw a boy of the fag type dart from behind the end wall of the shed and fling himself far out into the pool. Hot after him was a big fellow—Bill Kent, of all the people in the world! Kent threw himself into the water, dressed as he was, and went after the swimmer. Tearing across the pool, with frenzied strokes, was Bob Leaf. When he came up I saw who it was. Bob was making for the middle of my bank, and I hurried to the spot as hard as I could go. Kent was gaining rapidly on my fag, and if I had any doubts about the matter at first, I had little when I saw Kent's face. It was convulsed with passion. Practically we all got to the same place together. As Kent's right hand shot out to clutch Bob's heel as the lad clambered up the bank, I raised my crutch and struck the arm down.

"Keep back, Kent," said I, "or I strike again. Are you mad?"

In their excitement neither had seen me; but Bob, comparatively safe by my action, said pantingly: "Keep him off, oh, keep him off, Firmin."

"All right, Bob," said I, hurriedly. "Cut out of this, home."

My savage blow had brought up Kent—standing, so to speak. He breathed like a man who had run a mile race, and when I struck his arm he gave a gasp exactly like that of a dog snatching at something under water. When he realised my identity, he uttered a savage oath, and was for scrambling up again. No sooner did his right hand clutch the bank than he loosened his grip with a cry of pain and rolled back into the pool.

"You'll not land," said I, savagely, "until Leaf is clear;" and I meant exactly what I said.

Whether he heard me or not I don't know, but he turned round and went slowly across the pool: very slowly indeed, for he swam with one hand. When he had painfully dragged himself out, Leaf had vanished. Shaking in every limb, I contemplated Mordaunt's friend as he fell back, dripping as he was, into the seat; then hurriedly I limped after Bob. Save for that oath, Kent said not one word.

Bob was changing in his study when I got there. He was more than a bit shaky and chattery, so when he had put his dry rig on I carried him along to my room and got some tea. "What was it all about, Bob?" said I.

"Erpingham," said Bob.

In the next study I heard Dick moving busily, so I turned my lock on the word. "Go on," said I.

Bob's spirit had come back, and it was more from anger than anything else that he stuttered over what he had to say. As for me, I never said one word until he had finished. "I was just going to have a dip, Firmin; there was not a soul there when I went into the pool, but just as I was beginning to peel, Kent came lounging in. He saw me, and came across in that quiet friendly way he has and squatted down beside me. He chatted on about Lord's, our Houses, &c., and made me laugh at his sly jokes—you know he can, Firmin. Then all at once he said, awfully quietly, smiling away all the time: 'Where does Erpingham come from, Bob?' I tell you, Frank, I fairly jumped. 'I thought I was right,' he said, smiling away more than ever, and looking at me as though he could read me like large print. 'Where does he come from, Bob?' I didn't say anything, Firmin, but just looked at him. He kept his eye on me, and said at last: 'You don't say you don't know, anyhow, Bob; *ergo*, you do. Isn't that right?' And, Firmin, I was an awful ass, of course, but I jumped up and said: 'Yes, I do, but you can jolly well find out for yourself.' It was his laugh that made me do it. He collared me by my arm and jerked me down to my seat. 'I think you'd better say, Bob,' he said, and when I wouldn't he put the 'screw' on me, Firmin, look,"—Leaf rolled up his sleeve and showed me, and when I was nearly sick with pain I lammed him full swing across the face with my left hand. He dropped my right and I cut for dear life and the rest you saw. How did the beast find out that I knew, Frank?"

"He made a chance shot, Bob. Kent is the cunningest fellow I've ever known."

"Well, he won't bully me again," said Leaf hotly, "and I'll tell him so to-night, too."

"No, you won't Bob," said I, hastily, thinking of Kent's passion-distorted face. "You'll help Dick and me to pack up, and you'll lock your door or sleep in Dick's study to-night, and you'll go away like a lamb in the morning as well."

"You look pretty hot yourself, Firmin," said Leaf, simmering down a bit.

"It's a hot day, Bob."

Dick and I had all stowed away before the nine o'clock bell—our last bell—rang across the field, and when we both went to say "good-bye" to Forder he was as kind as Crosse and Asquith had been. As we came out, Dick said: "Forder's the finest beak I've ever seen, Frank."

"He want's some beating," said I.

In cold blood I determined to see Kent that night and let him know something I had thought about him. I went to his den. When I knocked and heard the "Come in!" I stumped heavily in. Kent was not there, but Jim Mordaunt was.

"Is Kent about, Jim?" said I.

"No. He's at Harker's surgery. He's broken his wrist."

This brought me up. "How was that?"

"He slipped as he was scrambling out of the pool."

I said, "Oh!" I couldn't say anything more.

Then I turned to Jim and held out my hand. "Good-bye, Jim."

Jim flushed, but he held out his hand: "Good-bye, Frank."

(*To be continued.*)

OLD STYLE CHRISTMAS.

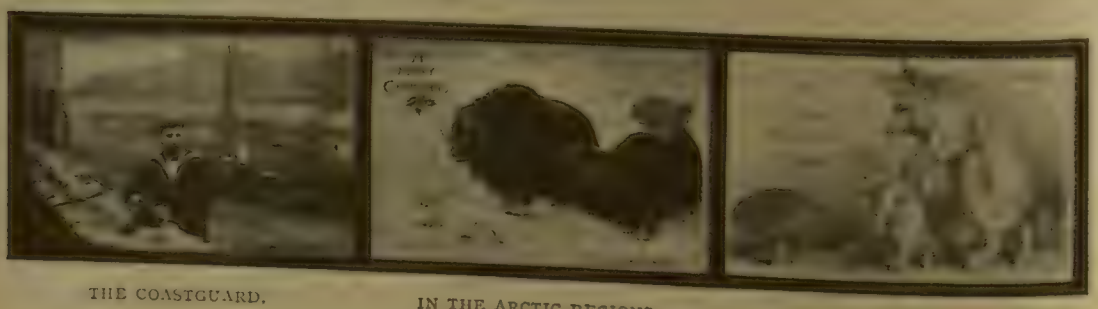
NEW STYLE CHRISTMAS.

The Latest in Christmas Postcards.

A CORRESPONDENT asks: "Why do English printing firms allow Germany to produce nearly all our picture postcards?" The answer is, that the Germans print them more cheaply and, as far as coloured cards are concerned, better. At least, this used to be the case, but now we are glad to see "Printed in England" on the face of many excellent coloured cards. Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons, whose products are second to none, encourage home industries to a marked extent. Of the twelve specimens of Christmas cards reproduced on these two pages, all but one are of English manufacture; and we should add that this fact was not discovered until after the cards had been selected entirely on their own merits. Some of them are at least the equal of any that we have seen which bear the imprint of the Fatherland. Readers will be further interested to learn that a very large number of photographic cards are printed in England.

We have lately received a copy of the first issue of *The Postcard and Stamp Collector's Journal*, published in Adelaide. Its publication proves that picture postcard collecting has now got a firm grip of the Antipodes, though a paragraph in the editorial columns of this journal hints that the collector has, until recently, been considered the victim of a mere "craze." "How many people condemn this fascination [of collecting] chiefly because they have never tried to collect. . . . One cannot step off the beaten track tramped by the common herd without exciting some remark, some sneer by these lethargic, ignorant, unoriginal specimens of humanity."

It is the same with postcards as with stamps, coins, pottery, &c. A mere haphazard collection, flung together anyhow, is of little value, and the devotee soon wearies of adding to his store. But where system and perseverance are used a collection of articles, no matter how



THE COASTGUARD.

IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS.

THE WALKING LESSON.

IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS. THE TRAVELLERS. SEA AND SKY.

intrinsically valueless they are, considered separately, may be made really valuable. A correspondent makes some very sensible remarks in this connection. "The time has long departed," he says, "when the collecting of cards was regarded as a useless craze, and now it is universally recognised, not only as a source of revenue to the country and an interesting hobby, but as an important educational factor. Looking through the albums of my friends, I am greatly struck by the want of method displayed. The average album usually holds a mixture of view, portrait, fancy and other cards, more or less disordered. That it is far more interesting to *specialise*, I can bear witness from personal experience, as for the past year I have collected none but portrait cards of celebrities, and now possess nearly two hundred photos., divided into sections representing politicians, the stage, sport, religion, naval and military leaders, &c."

That's it—specialise; and try to carry your own line further than any one else. When once you have got together some hundreds of specimens, your appetite will increase with what it feeds on,—you will be the true collector. In time to come the cards of to-day will be no longer purchasable, and you may then have reason to congratulate yourself on your erstwhile avidity.

We have also received cards from: Messrs. H. Vertigen and Co., 12 Carthusian Street, E.C.; Messrs. Woolstone Bros., 14 Chapel Street, Milton Street, E.C.; Messrs. Wrench Postcards, Ltd., 111 and 113 Great Titchfield Street, W.; Messrs. Gale and Polden, Ltd., 2 Amen Corner, E.C.; Messrs. Tester, Massy and Co., 22 Paternoster Row, E.C. A. W.

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THE JOYS OF A MOTOR. BELL-RINGERS. AN OLD SALT.

No. III.—THE AFFAIR OF THE TUNNEL.

Illustrated by GEORGE SOPER.

THE 22 Up puffed into Chotapur railway station wet and glistening, the rain pouring like a race from the awning of the engine and the sunshades of the carriages. She was more than half-an-hour late, and as it was known that the train would proceed as soon as the engine was changed, passengers immediately alighted and made an eager rush for the covered-in portion of the platform. Here, in the barred and caged arena known as the third-class waiting-room, a mob of poor natives jostled and squabbled for space to squat and perform their scanty ablutions in, or pushed their way to the tray of sweetmeat vendors with their usual display of sticky nastiness. "Chotapur! Chotapur!" shouted one porter, rushing along the train through the pelting rain. "Pani! pani!" shouted another, following with a bucket of water and a tin pot, from which he filled the brass lotahs held out of the carriage windows by soliciting passengers.

Pani! there was plenty of it everywhere. The gutters, congested with mango skins and stones and other garbage of the bazaars, were overflowing with it, and making the roads a swamp. Out in the distance only a portion of Dead Man's Hill was seen through the spume and wrack of the thunder torrent. The thirsty jungle and cracked, parched paddy fields had drunk their fill, and lay under a sheet of light brown turbid water, and on the horizon, dark and lowering, the lightning flashed to the accompaniment of awful crashes and the majestic organ notes of the heavens.

The monsoons had burst—burst with a fierceness and impetuosity that Chotapur had been a stranger to for fifteen years; and as men listened to the howl of the wind and the roar of the thunder, they looked at one another with pale and awe-struck faces.

Cummings, the loco-engineer, was standing on the platform, stern and autocratic-looking, with his faithful henchman, his office sepoy, behind him, holding a roll of bedding, and with a tiffin basket adroitly balanced on his head. As soon as the train stopped, Cummings dived into a first-class compartment, pushed his luggage under the seat, and composed himself in a corner. There was only one other occupant, a tall man, who had collapsed into an almost indefinable heap in a corner at the other end, with one foot cocked up on the window-sill, and his face buried in his hands. Cummings watched him steadily with a commiserating look. The engine shrieked, the platform glided away as the bell twanged, and the rain commenced to patter fiercely on the roof, whilst the shutters clattered with the wind. The man in the corner groaned loudly, lifted his head, looked surprised and rather abashed to find himself not alone, and then, recognising his fellow-passenger, hailed him in a thick, hopeless kind of voice.

"Is that you, Bell?" said Cummings. "Great Heavens, boy, I didn't know you! Whatever is the matter? You don't look exactly happy. Not ill, I hope?"

"No, my health's right enough, only I don't feel very cheerful. Who could in this

weather? Don't laugh in that annoying way, Cummings; remember this is my first year, and one has to get used to the fury of the elements. I've never seen or heard of anything like this before. Of course, *you* can smile as if it were all got up for your entertainment. You've got nothing to worry you."

Bell was the resident engineer, and had been in India exactly six months. He was a tall, fine-looking man, not handsome, but possessing features that are styled "pleasantly ugly." His friends considered him a good sort, but one of those unfortunates whom work worries and responsibility frets. A district of two hundred miles had been rather too big an undertaking for a young, unseasoned hand.

"You youngsters," replied Cummings, in his depreciatory manner, "mop up all the worry of the Universe, and leave none for older men."

"Ugh!" exclaimed Bell, as a tremendous thunder-crash seemed to split the firmament, "listen to that. That's what has been on my nerves for two days. Two hundred miles to look after in such weather, containing three big bridges over rushing rivers, not to speak of smaller ones over their tributaries. Culverts innumerable, shaky cuttings, tunnels, and a two hundred foot viaduct that from the bottom of the ravine appears to be balanced in the clouds. Think of the thousands of passengers who are passing over my section every day, whose lives are literally in my hands. I've been flitting up and down like a restless, wandering spirit, from bridge to cutting, from tunnel to viaduct. I'm off to examine the viaduct now. The permanent way inspector is superintending some repairs I am making there, but you cannot trust your subordinates. You know the Kelagaum bridge—seven hundred yards span? When I first saw it, I wondered why on earth they had built it on such massive lines. Down below one could see dirty patches of water here and there, a mockery to the gigantic piers which held up the structure. See it now! Those dirty patches have swollen into a rushing, foaming torrent, covering the very banks that were there to keep it in decent bounds. And how that bridge shakes! I was there all last night. Poor Blackwall designed and constructed it, didn't he? They tell me he put his very heart's blood into the work. He was a clever man—revolutionised some existing engineering theories, and paid the penalty by worrying himself to death. That fool of an inspector gave me his history yesterday evening, as we crouched into shelter from the blinding storm on the Dhilsa side of the bridge. He also repeated a story that is current among his gangers to the effect that Blackwall's continuous visits to the bridge in times of stress had left him too perturbed to rest quietly in his grave, and that, whenever a gale rises or heavy rain falls, his spirit may be seen wandering over the bridge. And when the inspector had finished speaking, believe me or not as you like, I saw an eerie-looking figure, with one hand on a strut, as if he were feeling the pulse of the bridge, gaping down at the rushing water beneath. It's unhinged me—it would have unhinged you."

"An excited imagination, my boy. Why don't I worry over bursting boilers and slack tyres? Worry doesn't do any one good. You may have a landslip or two, especially about here, but your time-keepers have probably recruited a few thousand coolies in readiness to clear the road, and they and the pay-clerks have arranged to line their pockets by showing on the sheets hundreds of coolies who were never there at all, and whom you will never bother to count. Cheer up! Let us talk of something else. Is there anything new about our old friend, Tantia Bheel?"

"That man is your hobby, Cummings. Bless me, I think I'll take to trying to catch the ruffian; perhaps life won't seem all work and departmental worry then. Yes, I saw Fielding yesterday. He's still on the trail, and has harried the outlaw tremendously of late. Tantia's got a new following, but Fielding has kept him too busy to do much mischief. Fielding has not been in direct touch with him for about a fortnight, and believes that he is ill and hidden away somewhere in the mountains. He said 'somewhere' very vaguely."

Cummings laughed uproariously.

"Fielding may have a big reputation, but he'll find Tantia one too many for him. If I'd had his opportunities our Bheel would have been hanged and buried by this. I go on leave in three months' time, and instead of spending the whole of the twelve months in Europe, I shall devote three or four to Tantia."

"Unhappy Tantia," observed Bell facetiously. "Why, Fielding swears that if it hadn't been for your stupidity he would have nailed him some time ago."

"Fielding," replied Cummings, "is unnecessarily bitter over that little affair. He

was flying round that gaol-yard like a madman let loose, instead of calmly devoting himself to the generalship of the situation. I don't want to appear boastful, Bell, but I've run up against Tantia more times than most of the men whose business and profession it is to catch him. I believe that it is my destiny to be the captor of this outlaw. I wouldn't be surprised if the opportunity occurs to-day or to-morrow, or at any time."

"This is rather far south for Tantia, isn't it?" said Bell, with an uncomfortable look on his face. "Besides, the weather is too rough for a dog to be abroad. Do you anticipate he will board the train?"

"He always does what is least expected, and turns up in most unlooked-for quarters. How it rains, to be sure!" Cummings gazed out of the window. The mountain scenery here was very beautiful, hundreds of waterfalls pouring down the adjacent hills. "Just look at that little watercourse that runs at the bottom of the embankment. A month ago I was walking along it dryshod, and now it roars like a cataract. See, there's a buffalo being swept down in it, and there's a pig in hot pursuit. The poor brutes belong to the village we passed ten minutes ago, and have evidently tried to ford the stream, as they have always done. I begin to wish I were in my arm-chair at home. Have a drop of whisky and soda, Bell?"

Bell acquiesced, and Cummings opened his tiffin basket and handed out the necessaries. Then he drew a pack of cards from his pocket, and lighting a trichi, both men settled down to a game.

Outside, the rain poured down incessantly. Dark masses of cloud hurried across the sky, were caught up on the mountain-tops, and, massed there, broke into a perfect deluge. Although it was not yet four o'clock, a deep twilight prevailed, sombre and depressing. In weather such as this, accidents often happened and narrow escapes occurred, and, despite Cummings's nonchalance, a foreboding of ill slowly crept upon him. He caught himself frequently glancing outside, especially when the train passed some dangerous portion of the road. This feeling was shared by Mason, the driver, and Gordon, his mate, who, in their exposed position, bore the full brunt of the storm.

"Somehow," said Mason, "I have a presentiment we're not going to reach our journey's end to-night. A hundred dibs to one we're cut off by a landslip. I know this district too well."

"I'll be glad when we're stabled," Gordon replied. "Bah! here's the shaky one. I hate this tunnel. This was where the rock slipped last year and bashed a co.ton-van in It's a miracle it didn't drop on the cab."

The engine whistled, Gordon gave the hand-brake a turn, and they rushed into the inky darkness. Mason trimmed the lamp of the water-gauge and placed his hand on the throttle ready for an emergency. Suddenly a loud rumble and a dull thud was heard. Mason shut off steam and applied the automatic brake, bringing the train to a dead stop.

For a few minutes neither man spoke nor moved. There was an appalling silence, broken only by the drip, drip of the water percolating into the tunnel. It was an interval of agonising suspense. Mason cleared his throat and whispered hoarsely, "Is every one killed? Why doesn't somebody speak or scream?"

Still the silence reigned. Presently they heard a carriage door open and shut with a noisy bash, and the sound of approaching footsteps reached them. "What's wrong, Mason? Why have you stopped?"

It was Cummings. Mason looked out in the direction from which the voice came. "Didn't you hear it?" he shouted. "The tunnel's fallen in at the back of us, and if I'm not mistaken the front is blocked, too. I ought to see the light from where we are now."

At the sound of human voices a hub-bub commenced in the train. Men shouted to one another, women chattered, and children commenced to sob. "What has gone wrong?" was every one's cry. The terrible thud had stunned them into silence, and the passengers had been afraid to speak or move. Speech soon developed into clamour, and several people left the train and floundered helplessly about in the dark.

"Oh, you're talking nonsense!" Cummings exclaimed excitedly, splashing through the water. Mason heard the ominous sound and groaned. "You're hardly round the bend yet," Cummings continued, "and besides, it's darker than usual. Go on a bit further."

"You're standing up to your boot-tops in water," said Mason, turning his engine-lamp on his superior, "and the grade is downward here. If the water can't get away, the end's blocked, and we're buried alive!"

"Don't be a fool," said Cummings shortly. "Perhaps there's been a slight slip somewhere, and the mouth is dammed across a foot or two. That will keep the water, but it won't keep us. Give me a light; I'll go and see for myself. Is that you, Bell? Look here, old man, get hold of the guard and one of his lamps, and go

"WHAT'S WRONG, MASON? WHY HAVE YOU STOPPED?"

up the train and pacify the passengers. Tell 'em not to leave the train on any account. You might go up further then, and see what's wrong with the tunnel."

"All right," Bell replied. "You examine the front end. Here, guard!"

"How stuffy the tunnel is getting!" Cummings muttered to himself. "Have you got your dampers closed, Mason? There's a lot of smoke hanging about. Confound them, why don't those niggers keep quiet?"

The uproar slowly began to abate as Bell and the guard went from carriage to carriage speaking assuring words. In twenty minutes Cummings and Bell both returned to the engine. "Hopelessly blocked," groaned Bell. "We're entombed," was Cummings' sepulchral utterance. For a brief interval no one spoke.

"Is there any hope of cutting our way out?" asked Gordon. "I've got two shovels here."

"You might as well have two pins. Why, man," said Bell, "it will take five hundred coolies half a day to shift that earth and rock away. You can spend your time saying your prayers. By the time relief comes to us, we'll be dead men."

"You're hopeful, anyhow," Gordon hit back. "I'm not going to die like a rat in a hole. I'll scratch my way out or die doing it."

"Let us get back," said Cummings, "and make ourselves comfortable in the carriage. My feet are wet and I'd like a drink. Let your fire out, Mason; it will leave us more air to breathe. When that's done, you and Gordon may come along for a peg. Pass the word to the guard. If we're saved, well and good; if we die—well, let us die like men."

Very soon all got to know the awful straits they were in, and after a long outburst a calmness born of despair settled over the doomed train. In Cummings's carriage all the Europeans huddled together. Fortunately, there were no white women or children. Drinks and smokes went round, hampers were opened, and, despite the stagnancy of the atmosphere, and their terrible, hopeless outlook, they bore themselves manfully.

Several hours went by, and physical discomfort had greatly increased. The air was hot and oppressive, and heavy in the lungs, and the passengers' spirits sank as not a sound intimated any attempt at rescue or deliverance. Bell anticipated that it would be midnight if the road were clear, before a

gang could be got down. Most of the occupants of his carriage had settled down to a doze. Cummings and he, however, still maintained a disjointed conversation. Presently the door between their compartment and the next swung open, and a tall, dark figure, clad in a goat-skin rug, stalked inside. Cummings was on his feet in an instant, for he recognised the intruder. It was Tantia Bheel!

"No resistance, sahibs!" exclaimed the well-known voice. "It is Tantia Bheel who speaks." A mob of his followers, armed to the teeth, had entered after him. "Please hand over your money, watches and valuables. Don't keep anything back, or I'll cut the offender's throat!"

Every one in the carriage was awake, and promptly obeyed the intrepid robber-chief. "Salaam, Cummings sahib," he said, as he relieved Cummings of his purse, gold watch and chain. "We often meet, but your opportunity is not yet. Don't leave this carriage, I warn you. I am placing a sentry at the door. I have to search the whole train, and I don't want bloodshed."

"One moment," said Cummings, aghast. "You're welcome to all we have, and although I am always glad to see you, you're more than welcome now. How did you get into this tunnel? Tell me this, I beg of you. Were you on the train, or were you in hiding here?"

"SALAAM, CUMMINGS SAHIB," HE SAID, AS HE RELIEVED CUMMINGS OF HIS PURSE, GOLD WATCH AND CHAIN.

"Neither one nor the other," Tantia replied. "I saw your train enter, and knew the front was blocked, and I heard the crash that sealed you from behind. I was outside when it happened. Nothing, however, stops Tantia Bheel, so I am here, robbing the train."

"Would you leave women and children here to die if you could save them?" inquired Cummings. "I know the nobility of your character too well for that," he lied, as he shudderingly remembered some of Tantia's excesses. "In a few hours we shall be dead—long before help can come to us from Chotapur. When you have got all you want will you show me the way out? Think how much it will increase your good name!"

"I shall save you," said Tantia, "when I've got all I want. Wait for half an hour. I'll see you again," and he vanished.

In the next carriage—a third class—he continued his plundering search. Every occupant was examined, every bundle was opened. The poor natives hauled out their

little store, stripped themselves of their ornaments, and meekly handed them over. Slaps and thumps were freely administered to any recalcitrant, Marwaris and Boris coming in for a special share. Now and again he handed back his belongings to some humble and especially poor creature, and occasionally he augmented them with the property of somebody else. "Here are ten more rupees," he whispered to a wizen-faced, ragged old dame, who sat huddled up in a corner, "but let not that high-stomached Bunnia see them, for they were once his." The wrinkled features became more puckered with gratitude, but Tantia had gone before a word could be spoken.

In Cummings's compartment the passengers were eagerly awaiting Tantia's return. The half-hour lengthened interminably, and still the outlaw remained absent. "I'll go and look for him," Cummings blurted irately, "and take the consequences. I can't stand this stuffiness any longer. My heart's beating in my head, and an hour more of this will send me mad!" He was rising from his seat with the air of a man about to sacrifice his life for his fellows, when Bell tugged him back. "Wait a little longer," the latter whispered; "I may be dreaming, but I fancied I heard the sounds of picks and shovels at work a few minutes ago. Listen." A dead silence followed his remarks, and then the wan, strained faces of the little group relaxed slowly into smiles. Above the awful hush, from time to time came the unmistakable sounds of a rescue-party at work. Cummings's eyes gleamed, and he slapped his thigh, and Bell, divining his thoughts, winked at the engine-driver.

How the moments lagged now! The native passengers had caught the refreshing noises outside, and a subdued hub-bub commenced. Then in an instant the whole train burst into an uproar. The tunnel had been pierced, and men with smoking torches in their hands were advancing and hallooing with all their might. The Europeans dashed through the doorway, jumped on to the track, and floundered towards the tunnel mouth.

Cummings was out first. The night was very dark, no stars being visible, but dozens of hurricane lamps and torches lit up the group of workers. Three white men stood among the coolies, the permanent way inspector, the station-master, and, to Cummings's great astonishment, the renowned Police Superintendent, Fielding.

"Every one alive?" was the first question.

Cummings, in his excitement, did not hear it. He walked straight up to Fielding and exclaimed, "We've got him! Tantia's inside with his followers, and has robbed the train. Don't mess things up this time!"

"Thanks for the advice," answered Fielding in frigid tones, but without displaying any annoyance. "I've taken all precautions. My men are guarding the aperture now and examining all native passengers as they pass out."

"How the dickens did you know?" queried Cummings, almost breathless with astonishment.

"Oh," replied Fielding, "we captured a small dacoit party yesterday, and the worthy foujdar* tortured one until he peached. The train following yours was conveying bullion for the Bombay Mint, and Tantia had arranged to take advantage of the usual stop in the tunnel to uncouple the guard's van and rifle it. I can't imagine how such news gets abroad. Some of our trusted native officials must be interested, and keep the robbers informed. Those blackguards want dealing with first, and then railway dacoitics will cease."

"You've been pretty prompt," said Cummings generously.

"Yes," Fielding replied, "I wanted to be down here before the bullion train, and was fortunate in catching the coolie special to clear the track. That inspector deserves credit. He had five hundred men equipped for work and in the trucks one hour after D Cabin telegraphed that the 22 Up had not reached the viaduct, and he feared it was entombed in the tunnel. Are you sure Tantia's inside?"

"Sure?" exclaimed Cummings indignantly. "Why, man, I was robbed by him!" and he walked away disgusted.

The passengers, in the meantime, were filing out rapidly, each one carefully hugging his baggage. When the last had come out, Fielding, leaving a strong guard at the mouth, ordered his men to accompany him inside. Cummings, Bell, and all the whites followed, armed with shovels and crow-bars. Fielding, purposely evading Cummings, asked the driver to command the guard.

With lamps and huge flaring torches which lit up every portion of the tunnel as they advanced, the party tramped forward, every moment expecting to be volleyed into by the marauders, who in a short time would be at bay. Having reached the train, Fielding, revolver in hand, boarded it and thoroughly searched every carriage. There was not a sign of the Bheels anywhere. The tender and

* A police constable or sergeant.

engine were also examined, with the same result.

"Forward!" was Fielding's laconic word of command, as he jumped from the foot-plate.

In silence the party followed, straining their eyes to catch a glimpse of the robbers, who must now have returned to the end of the tunnel. The sepoys, obeying Fielding, cocked the triggers of their old muzzle-loaders, and cautiously stepped out. The men were breathing hard, and the torch-carriers slowed down to get in the rear. Presently impenetrable darkness loomed ahead. They were at the tunnel's end—and also at the end of a wild-goose chase. Not a Bheel was to be seen!

The whole posse immediately formed into a circle round Fielding, and looked bewildered. Fielding's face wore an expression of almost childish urbanity. He quietly unloaded his revolver, and returned it to its case. Then he looked significantly at Cummings, ejaculated "Phantoms," and turned to wend his way back.

WITH LAMPS AND FLARING TORCHES THE PARTY TRAMPED FORWARD.

"You're wrong," said Bell, in a voice that arrested him. "We were robbed by Tantia Bheel and an armed band, not by ghosts. They've escaped, and I fancy I can solve the mystery. The tunnel top is very thin a hundred yards back from here, owing to a peculiar break in the rock formation which necessitated the use of masonry to stiffen the walls. Look up, not down, as we've been doing. Then, unless I am greatly mistaken, we shall be able to account for the Bheels' escape, and our own salvation from suffocation."

It was even as Bell had said. A rope depending from the tunnel top indicated the exact spot. A sepoy clambered up and disappeared from sight. When he came down again, he said to his chief with a grin, "Tantia burra budmash hai." (Tantia is a big scoundrel.)

"You're wrong," said Cummings, rounding on the man; "he's a Phantom."

COMPETITIONS FOR DECEMBER.

Last day for sending in, December 18. (*Foreign and Colonial Readers, February 18.*)

NOTICE.—At the top of the first page the following particulars must be clearly written, thus:

Competition No. ——, Class ——, Name ——
Address ——, Age ——.

Letters to the Editor should not be sent with competitions.

We trust to your honour to send in unaided work.

Pages should be connected with paper-fasteners; not pins.

Write only on one side of the paper.

COUPONS.—In order to ensure that those who compete for our prizes are actual purchasers of the magazine, we require all competitors to affix to their competitions the coupons which will be found on an advertisement page. A coupon is provided for each competition. Please use paste, gum, or paper-fasteners for attaching these coupons to the paper.

You may send as many attempts for each competition as you like, but each attempt must be forwarded in a separately stamped envelope and bear a coupon.

Every prize-winner is requested to apply for his prize. Only those articles actually offered for competition will be awarded as prizes. Girls may, however, have tennis-racquets or hockey-sticks instead of footballs.

Address envelopes as follows: Competition No. ——, Class ——, THE CAPTAIN, 12 Burleigh Street, Strand, London, W.C.

All competitions should reach us by December 18.

The Results will be published in February.

AGE RULE: A Competitor may enter for (say) an age limit 21 competition, so long as he has not actually turned 22. The same rule applies to the other age limits.

In every case the decision of the Editor is final, and he cannot enter into correspondence with unsuccessful competitors.

No. 1.—***"Famous British Sailors."***—On one of our advertisement pages you will find twelve pictures. Each picture is intended to represent the name of a famous British sailor. Write the name under each picture, fill in your name, age, class, and address, tear out the page, and post to us. Prizes: Three "Spartan" Footballs, by John Jaques & Son. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.
Class III. . . Age limit: Twelve.

No. 2.—***"Best Review."***—Which do you consider the best review published in our "Book Corner" this month, and why? Replies should not exceed 300 words in length. Prizes: Three Compendiums of Indoor Games, manufactured by Messrs. F. H. Ayres, Ltd. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . No age limit.
Class II. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class III. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 3.—***"Photographic Competition."***—Send a print from your best negative. Photographs must be original, *i.e.*, not copied from the work of others. Neatness in mounting will be taken into consideration. Prizes: Three Footballs, supplied by Messrs. A. W. Gamage, Ltd. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . No Age limit.
Class II. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class III. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 4.—***"Drawing Competition."***—Send a sketch of a *bird*, in pen, pencil, or colours. Prizes: Two powerful "Acme" telescopes, manufactured by Messrs. F. Darton & Co. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 5.—***"A Telephone Talk."***—Two persons, A and B, are speaking on the Telephone. B's replies only are given here.

(1) "With pleasure."
(2) "Certainly not."
(3) "How will 2 P.M. to-morrow do?"
(4) "Well, I hope you'll like it."
(5) "Never saw a better."
(6) "Idiot!"

Tell us what you think A said to elicit these remarks. Put B's reply after each of A's speeches so that we can see at a glance how the conversation shaped. The Prize will be a Guinea Box of Conjuring Tricks, manufactured by Messrs. Hamley Bros., Ltd. (See Prizes page.)

One Age limit: Twenty-one.

No. 6.—***"Other Uses Competition."***—How can the following articles be made useful for purposes for which they were not originally intended?

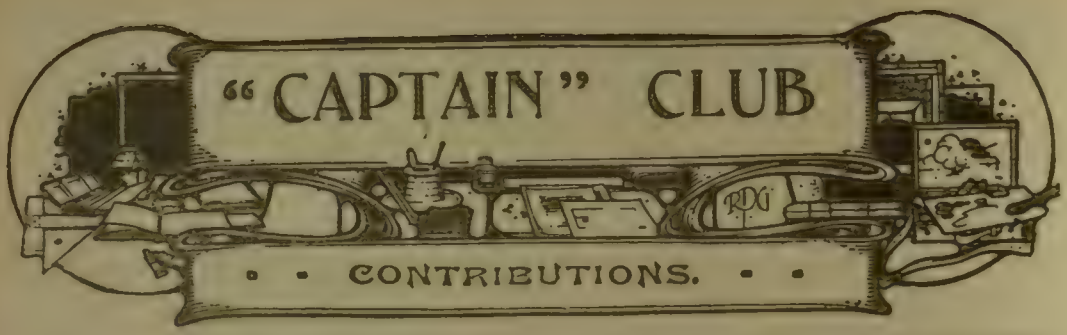
(1) A brick.
(2) An old umbrella.
(3) A horseshoe.
(4) An old barrel.
(5) An old hat.
(6) Old postcards.

This is a competition for our mechanically inclined readers, and to the sender of the best reply (which *must* be brief), in each Class we will award a vertical steam engine, supplied by Mr. Charles Morrell, Oxford Street, London, W. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

FOREIGN and COLONIAL READERS are invited to compete. In their case the time limit is extended to ***February*** 18, Australian readers being allowed ten days longer. By "Foreign and Colonial" we refer to readers living ***outside*** Europe. There will be ***no age limit.*** One prize of 5s. will be awarded to the sender of the best entry in each Competition. Envelopes should be marked: "Foreign and Colonial December Competitions."

Coupons must not be sent loose.



THIS part of the Magazine is set aside for Members of the CAPTAIN Club, to which anybody who is a regular purchaser of THE CAPTAIN may belong. Contributions should be kept quite short. Drawings should be executed on stiff board in Indian ink. CAPTAIN Club contributions are occasionally used in other parts of the Magazine.

BOOKS by CAPTAIN authors are awarded to all the contributors to this month's "Captain Club" pages. Each contributor is requested to select a book.

Some Memorable Frosts.

IT is now eleven years since this country has experienced a really severe winter: though the prophets have, time after time, foretold one of exceptional severity. The great heat-wave of last September has recently been construed as the forerunner of a complementary spell of cold. We shall, in due course, see how far such a deduction is justified.

Meanwhile, a brief review of notable frosts forms a quite seasonable topic. Many of our readers must still have vivid recollections of the terrific cold which swooped down upon us on January 25, 1895, and stayed six weeks, when it was succeeded by an unusually delicious spring. During the frost the thermometer sank to 17 degrees below zero at Braemar, breaking all records for nearly half a century.

Almost equally severe was the winter of 1890–1891, when a four-in-hand coach was driven over the ice from Oxford to Iffley, and skaters could descend the river for many miles. Our "Old Boys" will remember the winters of 1878–1879, 1864–1865, 1860–1861, and 1854–1855, as showing Jack Frost to advantage—or disadvantage, as personal taste must decide. The first winter of Victoria's reign also distinguished itself by exceptional severity. Going further back, we come to the extraordinary frost of 1814—the year before Waterloo—which lasted for three months, and made the Thames between London Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge the great playground of the metropolis, as shown in the accompanying illustration. That charming writer, Gilbert White, tells us that in January 1776, a very wet season was succeeded by such severe frost and so heavy a snowfall that all the roads leading to London were completely blocked.

John Evelyn, the diarist, notices two exceptional winters, those of 1683–1684 and 1658. The first lasted for two months, during which the Thames was used by Londoners as a highway, a market, and pleasure resort. Trees were split by the cold as though by lightning; and "fowls, fish, and birds, and all exotic plants and greens universally perished."

A VIEW OF ONE OF THE GIGANTIC STONE FIGURES SCATTERED ALONG THE AVENUE TO THE MING TOMBS, NANKING, CHINA.

Copyright Stereograph, Keystone View Co.

Yet the winter of 1658 was even more vigorous.

We are told by Philippe de Comines of a great frost that distressed the Flemings in 1468. People lost limbs by frost-bite.

The winter of the years 763–764 may conclude our list. A contemporary, Paul the Deacon, asserts—with what accuracy it is impossible to judge—that the Black Sea was congealed to the depth of more than nine yards, and could be traversed on foot for a hundred miles.

S. P.

FROST FAIR ON THE THAMES, 1814.
From a contemporary print.

A Huge Iceberg.

TO sight an iceberg is considered quite a common occurrence nowadays, but few are observed of the dimensions and formation as that recorded in the following narrative:

"We were bound from Halifax to Glasgow, and two nights after leaving Halifax a perceptible change was noticed in the temperature of both atmosphere and water. We were, at that time, just entering the Arctic current which comes down from the North Pole and carries with it immense sheets of ice which break up into small floes as they enter the southern latitudes; and the utmost caution has to be observed by captains navigating these waters. There was a full moon out, and the atmosphere was so calm that voices could be distinctly heard on small fishing trawlers half a mile away. About 4 bells in the middle watch, the 'look-out' reported something which looked like a large cloud on the horizon, and the captain slowed down; then steamed slowly ahead, continually taking the temperature of the water. As we drew closer we saw that the object was a tremendous iceberg. It was about 150 ft. in height above the surface of the water, and its sides, which were nearly equal, were not less than one mile in length; huge blocks of disengaged ice were floating about it, and the moon's rays, shining full on its side, presented a dazzling picture. We steamed right round, and the opposite side appeared to be loaded with huge boulders and mud, and, standing in a very forlorn attitude on a small promontory, a large polar bear was observed distinctly. Frequently two floes would drift together with such force as to crush every object in their way and, when

meeting together, crash into a thousand pieces with the most fearful concussions. We steamed slowly round whilst the officers made observations, and then proceeded on our course again, but I have never before witnessed such

A DIMINISHING ICEBERG IN MID-ATLANTIC.

Taken from the deck of a liner. It is seldom possible to obtain such a clear view of these masses of ice which infest the seas, as steamers generally give them a wide berth.

Photo. by Captain F. H. Shaw.

an imposing spectacle, being truly loth to leave it."

C. G. C.

The Value of Cocoa-nuts.

SOME extraordinary stories are told of the value of cocoa-nuts as an efficient food. The following will show the value of them: A vessel that once left San Francisco for Sydney with four hundred passengers, in consequence of running short of stores had to put in at Samsa, where a large quantity of cocoa-nuts was obtained.

During the remainder of the passage very heavy weather was encountered, in which the vessel became waterlogged, only reaching Sydney after a perilous journey of eighty days, during which time all the provisions ran short, and men, women, and children were fed only upon cocoa-nuts, being at last reduced to one per diem for each adult. Notwithstanding the diet, not a life was lost, not a single case of sickness occurred, and all the passengers landed in a healthy and well-nourished condition.

F. A. KNIGHT.

Choice of an Occupation.

"Be what nature intended you for and you will succeed."

WHAT shall I be? This is the question which confronts the average male when in his middle teens. It is one of the most serious and critical questions that he will ever have to answer, and answer it he must.

In these brief remarks we cannot touch even the fringe of such a far-reaching and many-sided subject. Its difficulties are many, and serious beyond all realisation is a wrong choice. In the hope of making these notes helpful, however, we mention some of the ways in which both parent and child often act unwisely.

Nowadays, parents ask, "What shall we do with our boys?" That does not sound as if the boys were going to have a voice in the matter at all.

Many boys, it is true, manifest no particular taste at the close of their school career; if they do, by all means let it be encouraged and considered.

What often happens, though, is, the choice made conflicts with the parents' wishes, and the boy is thrust into some occupation for which he is altogether unsuited, simply to gratify their whim. This is one of the greatest mistakes that could be made.

Let the parents rather ask, "What can the boy do for himself, and how can we best help

THE CAT SHOWN IN THIS PICTURE WAS FOUND SLEEPING AMONG SOME YOUNG CHICKENS IN A BROODER-HOUSE, AND IS HERE DEPICTED FRATERNISING WITH HER FEATHERED FRIENDS.

Photo. by "Cliftonian."

him?" If possible, he should be made to grasp the idea of his own responsibility, and towards the close of his school career he should be given to understand that the time has come when the question must be answered.

There is one occupation which we would advise every youth to avoid—that is, the life of the ordinary clerk. Present-day education gives many a bias towards this, and leads them to scorn the idea of manual labour.

A gentleman is not one who is ashamed to use his hands—this is *false gentility*, and it is affecting many youths to-day.

The result is, their aversion to the workman's

THE VAST EXAMINATION HALL, NANKING, CHINA.

One of the most remarkable institutions in the world, consisting of rows of brick cells in which candidates work out their papers.
Copyright stereograph, Keystone View Co.

dress and soiled hands causes them to despise, perhaps, the very occupation for which they are best fitted.

Let all aim at writing well, and speaking correctly, but above all be it remembered—

"*Be what nature intended you for.*"

J. A. HAIGH.

[A very sensible essay.—O.F.]

Oaks in Miniature.

DO any CAPTAIN readers know the secret of growing oaks at home? Perhaps some of our friends with a taste for novelties would like to take up this new departure. First, secure a good ripe acorn, then suspend it by a piece of cord within half an inch or so of water contained in a glass. There let it stay, for if permitted to remain without disturbance for a few months it will burst, send a root into the water and shoot upward a straight, tapering stem covered with beautiful little green leaves. In this manner a young oak-tree can be cultivated and become an interesting object to all that behold it.

As soon as the plant has made its appearance it will be found beneficial to change the water frequently. The chestnut will also grow if treated in like manner, as will several other nut trees.

GODFREY T. LAWRENCE.

Working Boys and Winter Evenings.

BOYS learning a foreign language at home without a teacher will find the following method rapid and easy. If, for instance, we want to learn Italian: First we get an English translation of an easy Italian book. We read this over and over until a good deal of it remains in the memory. Then we get the foreign book itself. After mastering the articles and two or three tenses of the verbs "to have" and "to be," we are now in a position to pick out, partly by guessing, partly by remembering, sentence after sentence whose meaning is clear. Every day that we pore over the book an increasing number of passages becomes plain to us. If baffled by a "jaw-breaker" or an idiom, we can refer to the translation. We notice that the masculine form of the article "the" is followed by words ending in "o," while the feminine form precedes many words ending in "a," therefore nouns ending in "o" are masculine and nouns ending in "a" are feminine. There is no irksome grammar; we learn the language in much the same way as a child learns to speak English. The child becomes familiar with constantly repeated words or directions, such as "Baby, bring papa's pipe," long before it has any idea of what "bring" and "pipe" mean.

W. BRESLIN.

"Hey Down, Derry Down."

THIS mixture of apparently meaningless words often met with in songs, is in reality a corruption of part of an old Druidical song which ran, "Hai down ir deri

SMALL, EXCITED SPECTATOR: "Play yer a game of draughts, ole sport? You can have first move!"
Drawn by R. Murray Robertson.

danno." The meaning of this was, "Let us hasten to the oaken grove." It is surprising how very little it has changed from the original, considering that it is over two thousand years old.

G. P. JEWITT.

Esperanto: the International Language.

THE aim of the Esperantists is to make Esperanto a common *second* language for all nations, not to displace existing languages.

Esperanto is very easy to learn and the grammar can be mastered in less than an hour. The language is built up from two thousand root words. Every noun ends in *o*, every adverb in *e*, and every adjective in *a*. Thus, the root for father being patr, patro means a father, the adjective patra means paternal, and patre means paternally. The vocabulary is enlarged by the addition of prefixes and suffixes. There are five prefixes and twenty-six suffixes. By adding the suffix *in* to the masculine root the feminine is formed, *e.g.*, patro, a father; patr*in*o, a mother: koko, a cock; kok*in*o, a hen. Contraries are formed by means of the prefix *mal*; bona, good: *mal*bona, bad. To form the adjective, *n* is added to the subjective case. Prepositions take the subjective case. Twelve grammatical terminations and the verb *esti* give all the voices, moods, and tenses of the verb. *Mi amas*, I love; *mi amis*, I loved; *li amos*, he shall love; *ni amus*, we should love; *li amu*, let him love. By means of an Esperanto key it is possible to read anything in Esperanto, without any previous knowledge of the language. These keys only cost a halfpenny. An English-Esperanto Pocket Vocabulary costs a penny. "Lessons in Esperanto" (price sevenpence), by G. W. Bullen, is a good book to learn Esperanto with. Information about the language, and text-books can be obtained from the British Esperanto Association, 13 Arundel Street, Strand, London, W.C. By means of Esperanto, men of one nation have talked with men of another, although neither could speak the others' language. Sir William Ramsay, Max Müller, and many other great men have written in praise of Esperanto.

E. J. PATTERSON.

"What was you doin' last night wie' th' lantern, lad?"
"Going courtin'."
"I never took one when I went."
"I know that; ar've seen th' missus."
Drawn by R. Murray Robertson.

12 BURLEIGH STREET,
STRAND, LONDON.

A Happy Christmas to You!—I think it is quite a mistaken idea which some people have that Christmas is going out of fashion, or, at any rate, is losing its charm. I don't think Christmas will ever lose its charm. I think that Christmas will always be Christmas. Apart from its being a festival of the Church, Christmas possesses an interest of a peculiarly sentimental nature. It is the time when all who can, make for Home, the time of all times in the year when all those who are so fortunate as to have parents living endeavour to be with them. The fact that nowadays we very seldom have what is called a seasonable Christmas doesn't make any difference. It is Christmas-time—when the lonely squatter in Australia thinks lovingly of the cosy old home amid English fields; when the soldier on foreign service, and the sailor afloat on the deep, dream of mothers and sisters, sweethearts and friends. Christmas is the time of the year for thinking of those we love, and so, how is it possible, while the world lasts, for such a season to go out of fashion?

We talk about the old-fashioned Christmas in the sentimental way we do because artists like Phiz, Cruikshank, and Ralph Caldicott, and writers like Dickens, have given us very alluring pictures of how Christmas was celebrated a hundred years ago. There were several reasons for the extreme jollity of what I may call the Pickwickian Christmas. In those days there were not half so many holidays as there are now. There were no Bank Holidays. A good many clerks of the Bob Cratchitt type never got a holiday, and so, when people did get a day off, they enjoyed it with zest. Then in those days one couldn't nip into the nearest town by a local train and see a pantomime, and so folks had to get all the amusement they could out of each other. Hence those delightful pictures of old country dances. I don't suppose there was much more eating and drinking then than there is now, though, to be sure the pictures of that era tend to give one the idea that folks did themselves very well indeed. Mr. Herbert Paul, in one of his essays, remarks on the "appalling gluttony" of Mr. Pickwick and his companions, and really, when you come to think of it, they did eat a lot.

But one thing to remember is, that they *could* eat a lot; they were men who came of a healthy stock; they had not had their nerves destroyed by travelling at sixty miles an hour, and being swept along the streets in motor-'buses. I am of opinion that the present prevalence of nervous complaints, which, as any doctor will tell you, are increasing in number every year, is largely attributable to the rate at which we travel, and to the fact that we use our brains so much more than our ancestors did. Consider, for instance, the amount of reading that is done now in comparison with what was done in the Pickwickian days. Now every cabman, while waiting for a fare, reads his evening paper. Cabmen did not read papers in this way in Pickwick's time, for the very good reason that they were too expensive a luxury for them to indulge in. . . . But as regards our worthy ancestors and their grub. Yes, they must have had splendid stomachs, for nearly all the fare provided was some rich kind of meat—beef, venison, capons, hog's head—sets you smacking

your lips, doesn't it? When I was a boy, I was always very hungry, and it used to make my mouth water to read the meal chapters in Ainsworth and Dickens. I simply gloated over the chapters in "The Tower of London," where Og, Gog, and Magog sat down to their tremendous meals—that repast, for instance, when one of the giants threw his cap at Xit, and knocked the mannikin into a cauldron of soup that was simmering over the grate (I speak from memory). All accounts of meals used to interest me. When you are getting fairly scanty rations at school, vividly written descriptions of stupendous meals produce a sort of internal *ache*.

CHRISTMAS MORNING.
From the painting by Webster. Photo. Woodburytype.

This talk about food is not unallied with Christmas, for Christmas is certainly the time when people overeat themselves as a matter of duty. There are few things more productive of a "liver" than turkey, and goose is a trying dish for a weak stomach. To my mind a goose is a lovely bird. It is nice when it is roast, it is nice when it is cold, and it is extremely nice when it is hashed. One advantage of not living in a great mansion where "rekerky" meals are provided every day is, that one experiences the simple joys of hashed goose and ordinary hash. I don't suppose his Majesty the King has ever had hashed goose, nor yet Lord Rosebery, nor the Duke of Devonshire, because in great households things are not hashed. Again, cold plum-pudding is a delightful thing to eat—extremely indigestible, of course, but infinitely more palatable than hot plum-pudding—yet cold plum-pudding is, I have no doubt, unknown to his Majesty, to Lord Rosebery and to the Duke of Devonshire. There is a tastiness about a good many things when they are cold that is absent from them when they are warm. Who is so bold as to declare that cold lamb, with mint sauce and potatoes, is not just as tasty as hot lamb for, say, supper on Sunday evening? Another thing that is seldom put on my lord's table, or served at clubs or restaurants is the humble but succulent *baked potato*. I always have baked potatoes on Sunday evening. I have heard of an Irish clergyman's family whose Sunday supper used to consist *solely* of baked potatoes. Meat wasn't dreamed of. Think of that you so-called supporters of the Church who let your priests go hungry!

Talking about clergymen's families reminds me that there used to be a certain old bishop who very kindly and thoughtfully bore in mind the poorest clergy in his diocese on Christmas Day. During the year he was, no doubt, pretty sharp with them if he discovered any dereliction on their part in carrying out their duties, but however sharp the epistles he might have addressed to his "dear brethren in God" during the year, on Christmas Day a very different kind of letter used to arrive from him, and a very practical one; for with it would come a snug little cheque that was more than welcome in those country vicarages. And so, this Christmas, I just wish to set on record that this old bishop's kindness has not been entirely forgotten. The people who complain about the big incomes that the bishops receive do not always know what the bishops do with those incomes.

Let us then follow this dear old bishop's example and bear in mind that of all seasons of the year, Christmastime is the season when one's poorer brethren should be remembered. And not only one's poorer brethren, but one's brethren generally. The cheapest present you can give affords satisfaction entirely disproportionate to the cost of that present—always remember that. I once knew a little boy who bought twelve presents with a shilling. Of course, they were all of an insignificant nature, but each little penny present was sufficient to tell some one that he was not forgotten. And really, you can buy quite nice things for a penny. Walk down Ludgate Hill during Christmas week—say, on Christmas Eve, or a day or two before. The sight of the gutter merchants with their penny toys is one that will not readily be forgotten. They stand in lines on either side of the road, closely packed, from St. Paul's Churchyard down to the bottom of the Hill, and the wonderful and fearful things that can be bought from them for a penny would occupy much space in the describing.

And now it seems to me that this is a suitable place at which to mention the Old Fag's Dinner Fund, which last year totalled up to a handsome amount, and gave pleasure to a very large number of poor children. I printed some of the letters which I received acknowledging our contributions, and these made evident what a lot of enjoyment can be provided for a few pounds. The money that came in after Christmas formed a little fund which I administered privately during the year, and I can assure my readers that this little private fund proved of very great help in certain cases of distress. THE CAPTAIN, by the generosity of its readers, was enabled partly to defray the expenses of a poor lad who had injured his spine, and had been told by the doctor that it was absolutely necessary for him to go to the seaside for six months if he ever wished to resume his employment. Again, thanks to the readers of THE CAPTAIN, I helped to swell a subscription list which was formed to set up a poor invalid—an ex-soldier—in a little tobacconist's shop. He had an aneurism of the heart, and, although barely middle-aged, was forbidden ever to do any work again which caused him any exertion. He is now happy in his little shop selling packets of tobacco and cigarettes—and THE CAPTAIN has helped in this good deed. Again, out of this fund that was left over from our Christmas Dinner treats, THE CAPTAIN helped to send away some little children to the seaside in August, and other sums were expended on like necessitous cases.

The Old Fag's Money-box.—This year I propose that this Fund receives the name of the Old Fag's Money-box, and that the money be entrusted to myself to administer in such ways as I think best. A considerable part of it will, of course, go to provide enjoyment for children at Christmastime, but I should also like to have a little in hand during next year to apply to such deserving and pathetic cases as come before my immediate notice. And if, during the time that elapses before our next Christmas number appears, any reader should have especial cause for thankfulness, or to express gratitude for benefits received (in the shape of a legacy of a million pounds from some rich aunt, for instance), I beg that he will remember

THE OLD FAG'S MONEY-BOX,

in which there will always be room for contributions of any size, from sixpence upwards. My readers may rest assured that their donations will be administered with the very greatest care by the elderly gentleman who hereby begs to appoint himself almoner of your Christmas charity.

ALEXANDER MACDONALD.

A new writer for boys. Author of "In Search of El Dorado" and "The Lost Explorers."

A Testimonial.—"An Old Boy of Thirty-three" writes: "A short time back I had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of THE CAPTAIN, when I realised at once that I had found the magazine which would satisfy a long-felt desire, viz., something that would take me back to my schooldays, and give me the same pleasure I felt then in the reading of school and adventure stories, and, at the same time, satisfy my mature and more fastidious literary appetite, which of course demands a strong and solid fare. Until I came across THE CAPTAIN I had failed to find anything which I could swallow with pleasure and benefit thereby. All I could find were either stories for the very young, or of the 'penny blood' style, composed of red impossibilities and machine-made—turned out by the yard. I read of one wonderful giant hero of fifteen who killed twelve men straight off, and I should not have been surprised to learn that he had drunk their blood, and then pushed the earth off its axis. However, I have got THE CAPTAIN, and, like the boy and the soap, I'm happy now I've got it. *Vive La Capitaine!*"—Thank you, Old Boy.

Do schoolboys work too hard?—Referring to my remarks on this subject, "Pater" writes: "You tried to show that no schoolboys are overworked. Here I beg to differ. I know from experience that the Army Class at Rugby School do a great deal of work, and, in my opinion, by far too much. Before breakfast comes a lesson lasting one hour; after breakfast there is a lesson from 9.15 to 10.45, and one following that from 10.45 to 12.15, after which comes another lasting an hour. Then dinner, which I think is very well earned. From 3 to 3.30 there is preparation for next lesson, and from 3.30 to 4 there is preparation for the lesson after that. These two lessons occupy from 4 to 5 and 5 to 6. Then follows tea, after which one and a half hours are spent preparing the first lesson for next day (this time is often lengthened to any time when necessary). Also from half to three-quarters of an hour is used up in preparation for the fourth lesson next day. This is the 'whole schoolday's' work—a minimum of ten hours! To add to this terrible state of affairs, twice a week there is a French lesson extending over two and a half hours, and once a three hours' lesson in mathematics. This ought not to be. It keeps the boys' minds concentrated in a deep and narrow groove, without a change of air, place, or masters. On a half-holiday the routine is not so long, for the three hours' work in the afternoon is let off, and football is played instead. I hope you will change your opinion."—I do as regards the Army Class at Rugby. I have been told that the cadets at Sandhurst and Woolwich are woefully overworked, too. Has any other "pater" any complaint to make?

SCHOOL SPORTS RESULTS, 1906.

BEDFORD MODERN SCHOOL.

Mile.—E. D. H. Jones, 5 min. 31 sec.
Half-Mile.—G. W. G. Royle, 2 min. 25 sec.
100 Yards.—H. W. Evans, 11⅘ sec.
High Jump.—G. W. G. Royle, 4 ft. 10 in.
Long Jump.—G. W. G. Royle, 18 ft. 4 in.
Cricket Ball.—E. Brickdale, 90 yd. 1 ft. 5 in.

CARNARVON COUNTY SCHOOL.

Half-Mile.—F. Evans, 2 min. 53⅘ sec.
Quarter-Mile.—Hubert Owen, 64⅘ sec.
100 Yards.—R. H. Williams, 11⅘ sec.
Hurdles.—R. H. Williams, 14⅖ sec.
High Jump.—F. Williams, 4 ft. 7 in.
Long Jump.—F. Williams, 15 ft. 5 in.
Cricket Ball.—R. Humphreys, 83 yd.

DARTFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

Mile.—Nettlingham, 5 min. 11 sec.
Quarter-Mile.—Fenton, 62⅘ sec.
100 Yards.—Gurrey ma., 10⅘ sec.
Hurdles.—Mosley, 17 sec.
High Jump.—Gurrey ma., 4 ft. 10 in.
Long Jump.—Mosley, 17 ft. 7 in.
Cricket Ball.—Wells, 75 yd.

GREY COLLEGE, BLOEMFONTEIN.

Mile.—O. Krause, 5 min. 33 sec.
Quarter-Mile.—C. Turvey, 58 sec.
100 Yards.—C. Turvey, 10⅘ sec.
High Jump.—E. Tennant, 5 ft. ½ in.
Long Jump.—C. Turvey, 19 ft. 4½ in.
Cricket Ball.—F. Stanton, 101 yd. ½ in.

LANCASTER SCHOOL.

Mile.—E. W. Holt, 5 min. 38⅘ sec.
Half-Mile.—R. S. Spooner, 2 min. 16⅕ sec.
Quarter-Mile.—A. N. Widdop, 62 sec.*
100 Yards.—A. N. Widdop, 11¼ sec.
Hurdles.—A. G. Bosanquet, 15⅗ sec.
High Jump.—E. C. Bosanquet, 5 ft. 4¾ in.*
Long Jump.—A. G. Bosanquet, 20 ft. 3 in.*
Cricket Ball.—A. N. Widdop, 92 yd. 1 ft. 4 in.
Weight.—T. A. B. Corless, 25 ft. 3 in.

LIVERPOOL COLLEGE UPPER SCHOOL.

Mile.—W. H. Weightman, 5 min. 15 sec.
Half-Mile.—T. W. Dawson, 2 min. 9⅕ sec.
Quarter-Mile.—F. B. Chavasse, 57⅘ sec.
100 Yards.—N. P. Laing, 11¼ sec.
Hurdles.—N. P. Laing, 20 sec.
High Jump.—T. S. Norman, 4 ft. 10 in.
Long Jump.—F. B. Chavasse, 18 ft. 7 in.
Cricket Ball.—D. Scott-Tucker, 77 yd. 2 ft.

MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL, OXFORD.

Mile.—Underhill, 5 min. 26⅕ sec.
Half-Mile.—Page, 2 min. 10 sec.
Quarter-Mile.—Jones ma., 59⅗ sec.
100 Yards.—Jones, 11 sec.
High Jump.—Tarbet, 4 ft. 6 in.
Long Jump.—Tarbet, 17 ft. 1 in.
Cricket Ball.—Venables, 82 yd. 1 ft. 5 in.

NEW COLLEGE, HARROGATE.

Half-Mile.—Fenn, 2 min. 45⅕ sec.
100 Yards.—Moorwood, 11⅓ sec.
High Jump.—Fenn, 4 ft. 11 in.
Long Jump.—Fenn, 17 ft. 6 in.
Cricket Ball.—Parry, 89 yd. 2 ft.

QUERNMORE SCHOOL.

Mile.—Cartwright, 5 min. 26⅘ sec.
Quarter-Mile.—Cartwright, 60 sec.
100 Yards.—Whittingham, 11⅘ sec.
Hurdles.—Whittingham, 16⅗ sec.
High Jump.—Knowles, 4 ft. 8½ in.
Long Jump.—Masia, 15 ft. 1¼ in.
Cricket Ball.—Mallett, 64 yd. 2 ft. 8 in.

VICTORIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Mile.—Fairbairn (Geelong), 5 min. 5⅘ sec.
Quarter-Mile.—G. Richards (Wesley), 55⅘ sec.
100 Yards.—J. H. Prout (Wesley), 10⅕ sec.
Hurdles.—H. M'Coll (Melbourne), 17½ sec.
High Jump.—A. B. Hearn (Geelong), 5 ft. 3¾ in.
Long Jump.—J. H. Prout (Wesley), 19 ft. 8 in.
Weights.—F. A. H. Boynton (Wesley), 34 ft. 6 in.

* School record.

CAPTAIN F. S. BRERETON.

Author of "A Soldier of Japan," a book for boys, and more than a dozen other tales of adventure.

Trent College Walk.—A number of the pupils at Trent College, which lies between Nottingham and Derby, spent their summer holiday in tramping to John o' Groat's and back.

They were led, says the *Daily Express*, by the chaplain of the college, and the headmaster was one of the party. The expedition was the outcome of a successful holiday tramp to Land's End the previous year. The students piled a tent, baggage, blankets, food, kettles, and the rest on a light cart, and tying a rope to the cart, eight or ten of the boys dragged it along. It was h rd work up some of the very steep hills, but they had the assistance of one or two extra helpers on these occasions. When nearing the Lake District one of the wheels of the cart required attention, and while it was undergoing repairs the party visited Keswick, and crossed the famous Honister Pass.

They met with bad weather one week-end near Beattock Summit, but a good Samaritan came on the scene, a shepherd who provided the party with peat for their fire, milk, oatmeal, and food, and refused any payment. When in Caithness-shire the boys met the Duke of Portland out with a shooting-party. He loaded their cart with a good supply of freshly killed grouse.

Two bicycles were among the transport.

They were brought into service for the scouts, who found suitable places for the evening's camp, made camp fires, had boiling water ready for the party, and ordered fresh stores and food to be ready at suitable spots. Messengers were also despatched on them to the post offices for letters, and when one of the party became footsore a bicycle was placed at his disposal.

The journey occupied thirty days, twenty-four of which were passed in walking, at an average of twenty-seven miles per diem. The four Sundays were spent in rest and devotion, and two days were lost in repairs.

Employment Bureau.—As I announced last month, it is my intention in future to set aside an advertisement page for the benefit of readers who wish to obtain posts or further their own interests in other ways. The charge for such advertisements will be ONE PENNY PER WORD, and we shall not accept advertisements which are under twelve words in length. Such advertisers as do not care to have their addresses published will be given a number, and the answers to their advertisements will be sent on to them from this office. We cannot, however, undertake to forward letters to foreign countries.

AN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL IN CORROBOREE DRESS.

We make no charge for the address or office number. A stamp must be enclosed for replies to be forwarded, and any inquiries with regard to the "Bureau" must be accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope. The "Bureau" is intended absolutely for amateurs, and no tradesmen's advertisements will be accepted under any consideration.

"How it Works."—The boy of a mechanical bent will find it a positive education in things mechanical to read this book by Mr. Archibald Williams, B.A., F.R.G.S., our Camera and Cycling expert. "How It Works" tells one of the *principles* of practically all the machines which the average boy knows or has at least heard of; and the diagrams make everything easily understood. In its way this book is unique, and a better or more useful Christmas present it is hard to imagine. It may be added that adults may also study it with advantage. The price is 3*s.* 6*d.*, and the publishers are Messrs. Nelson and Sons, Edinburgh.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

[As we receive a great number of letters, our correspondents are requested to bear in mind that we can only comment on communications that we consider to be of general interest. Readers requiring information quickly should enclose stamped envelopes or postcards, according to the length of the answer they desire.]

Raymond Parsey tells me that he corresponds with a young Jap, and learns from him that schoolboys in Japan devote sixteen hours a week to the study of the English language. Japanese schoolboys' amusements are lawn-tennis, boating, fencing, and wrestling. Here is the reply Raymond Parsey received from his friend after sending him out a copy of THE CAPTAIN: "Dear My Friend, I have duly received the most interesting magazine from you, now I have to thank you for your kindness. Some of the writes in the magazine was very amusing, I could not always understand it without trouble, but in novels in the magazine I found many phrases which I could scarcely read it, though I rely upon the helps of dictionary. It is my earnest wishing to send you a Japanese book translated into English, but I have no such book now, some day I will get it and send to you certainly. To your kind gift, I enclose picture postcards therein. Please tell me, what style of letter is prevailing among the business man. I have much pleasure to hear it, and to have a copy book, if possible."

F. S. Helmes sends an amusing letter from Australia referring to our recent serial, "The Track of Midnight." He says: "I have found nothing in that story I can reasonably growl at, and I congratulate the author on his evident knowledge of his subject. It is quite refreshing to find in a 'Home' magazine an Australian story that is not such utter drivel as the samples 'Home'

papers generally dish up. I buck a bit at the illustrations, though. Mr. Soper flatters our natives too much. His blacks are more like 'Fuzzies' than Australian nigs. I enclose a photo, of a genuine specimen in his feathers and warpaint, which my brother snapped the morning after a corroboree, before the gentleman had had time to wash himself; though, to be sure, it is seldom too late to catch them before that operation." I print herewith the portrait my correspondent encloses, and hope to hear from Mr. Helmes again. He has something to say, and he says it well.

"Erimus."—It is necessary for a journalist to have a bowing acquaintance with every subject under the sun. I suppose it is your ambition to get on to a London paper? Well, when you come to town you will either go "inside"—that is to say, on the editorial staff—or you will be put on the outside, or reporting, staff. You have got to do one thing, and that is, to find out what you are best at, and make yourself very efficient in that department. I should not advise you to make sub-editing your ambition. A gentleman on one of the great London dailies once told me that sub-editing was "dog's work,"

FATFACE: "Why don't you do some digging? Exercise develops the whole body, y' know."
MAN WITH TROWEL: "Yes, I've noticed the size of your jaw."

Drawn by Francis McLeod.

and I can quite believe him. It is the reporter and descriptive writer who get the experience and excitement. Write to me again if you want more detailed information.

George Kane.—I am not, as you seem to suggest, a rabid opponent of physical culture. What I think is, that fellows should not be always worrying about the enlargement of their biceps, but should endeavour to grow generally strong by taking plenty of all-round outdoor exercise. I have heard of a gentleman who went in violently for physical culture, with the result that while he put several inches on to his chest and developed muscles in his arms as hard as wood, he weakened himself internally, with the effect that he had violent dyspepsia. Perhaps he has got over that by this time, but I simply quote this case as showing that one can have too much of a good thing, and that it is possible to develop one part of the body to the detriment of another. All the same, the Sandow system has great virtues.

"THE ONLY WAY."

STOUT PARTY: "Which is the way to the village, my boy?"
RUDE BOY: "Well, mum, there's two ways for most folk, through the stile or down t' road; but, for t' likes o' you, there's only down t' road." (*And then he was surprised when she boxed his ears.*)

Drawn by Kenneth Glover.

"Picture Lover."—You might be able to obtain a reproduction of the picture, *The Burning of Joan of Arc*, from Mr. Augustin Rischgitz, Linden Gardens, Kensington, W., or at any rate this gentleman could put you in the way of obtaining a copy. I do not know what price you would have to pay for it, but I do not imagine it would be anything very great. I certainly do not think that your handwriting suggests that you are untidy, unmethodical, selfish, or that you have a weak chin. On the contrary, I think you are the opposite of all those. I am glad to be able to hand on your recommendation of Mr. John Oxenham's novel, "Profit and Loss," to my readers. It is pleasant to hear of a good book in this way, and if other readers have books to recommend, let them come along.

THE OLD FAG'S MORNING MAIL.

Drawn by F. Gratrix.

"Botherer."—I do not know why there is no tide in fresh water lochs. There is no subscription to the CAPTAIN CLUB. It is just this: If you are a regular reader you can send contributions to the Club pages, which, if good enough, and if space allows, will be inserted, in which case you receive books as prizes. I cannot tell your fortune by your handwriting, dear boy, but I can tell you that if one's fortune depended on one's hand-

writing, your future would be by no means a rosy one. Happily, however, one's handwriting has little to do with one's fortune. There is no harm at all in a boy going to the theatre. The only thing is, he should not let it become a craze with him, and this rule applies to everybody.

"Os Innominatum."—My good man, I do not pretend to foretell or to predict what will be the fortune of my readers. I simply amuse myself by hazarding a guess as to their characters, and I daresay that in a good many cases I am entirely wrong. I should say, for instance, that you are thoughtful and fond of reading, and that you dig into your work so hard that you will not often be plucked. The South Africans and that the shortest verse is not St. John xi. 9. As, however, he doesn't say which *is* the longest and which the shortest, we are not left much the wiser for his letter. Thomas Bones, Jnr., however, is more businesslike, and informs us that Esther viii. 9, is the longest verse in the Bible, and St. John xi. 35, the shortest.

"Swimmer."—For all information as to Life-Saving, you should apply to Mr. W. Henry, Hon. Sec. of the Life-Saving Society, 8 Bayley Street, London, W.C. The "howlers" you send are not bad. The boy who said it was "a hundred per cent. in the shade" was almost as original as the boy who declared that a certain Roman Emperor "died a naturalist's death"!

THE TERROR OF THE ROAD.

THE PAST— —AND PRESENT.

Drawn by Norman Wilks.

seems to be just as good a crowd as the New Zealanders.

Autograph Hunter.—Of course you ought to raise your hat when asking a cricketer for his autograph. You ought to raise your hat whenever you address a stranger, even if it is only to ask him for a match or the time. I am not going to tell you how you ought to write for an autograph. Any intelligent office boy could tell you that. If you will send me your album, I will get such signatures as I can for you. In return for this, kindly enclose a shilling for the Old Fag's Money-Box, and, of course, return postage on the album.

"Norman" wished to go in for our five guinea story prize, so wrote a tale, and then went out to ask a friend to come in and criticise it, leaving the story on the table meanwhile. When Norman came back he found that his baby sister had consigned his story to the fire. Another masterpiece gone! I sympathise with Norman. A similar accident befel one Carlyle, Thomas, whose first draft of "The French Revolution" was used by a maid for lighting the fire.

"Musician."—I should like a "Musical Corner" of all things, but at present space forbids. I cannot tell you where the largest organ in the world is, but very nearly the largest is that in the Town Hall, Sydney, New South Wales. It is a five manual and pedal organ, has 126 stops, and was constructed by Messrs. W. Hill and Sons, 1886–89. The organs in Haarlem Cathedral and the Albert Hall, London, are nearly as big.

Verses in the Bible.—L. S. Smith says that the longest verse in the Bible is not Esther ix. 8,

Jim Nrehtuos.—A pretty downright fellow, I should say. Don't drop your football when you enter the Church. Play with the lads of your parish, and endeavour to point out to them, in a mild way, that a man who loses his temper in a game is not a sportsman. They are rough fellows up your way, but they are made of the right sort of stuff.

"Liola."—I am keeping the "Christian's Corner" in mind. No Corner with that title will appear in THE CAPTAIN, but something of the kind suggested may in time become one of our regular features. Advertisements for the "Employment Bureau" are not rolling up very fast, and so we shall not open our doors until next month.

"Bird."—I have made a note of your suggestions. As for an article on "How to Train for Boxing," doesn't it occur to you that training for boxing is similar to that necessary for any other athletic contest? You must simply keep yourself fit and hard, go to bed early, take your tub every morning, eschew tobacco, and so on.

F. Baron.—When I can find a corner for your "Sketching on the Rhine" article, I will print it. At present there is no room. You can, of course, have it back if you don't care to wait, and this remark applies to all writers of accepted articles which have not yet appeared through ack of space.

"Old Blue."—Your handwriting is very strong and finished. I should say that you are firm and determined. If handwriting affords any criterion of character, there is very little the matter

with you. I shall use your article as soon as space permits.

L. B.—We are not going to start a "Health Corner" in this magazine. It is not a good thing for boys to be worrying about their bodies. Always thinking about one's health promotes hypochondria and all sorts of other horrid nervous complaints.

"Patella."—Your handwriting is all right, my worthy sawbones. It would be a dull world if everybody wrote copperplate, and had a copper-plate character. I should say you are a hard worker, and in time will be able to take off a leg with any man.

Reg. Fisher.—I opine that you are a little wanting in self-confidence, though that is simply a shot. Cultivate decision of character. Make up your mind what you are going to do with your life—and do it.

"Ordinand."—You are thoughtful, and I should think you were a good straight chap. You live in a part of the world that breeds fine men. See to it that you grow up a credit to the splendid old county of Devon.

"A Captain Reader."—You are quite right to tell me frankly what you want. When next Mr. Bell writes in THE CAPTAIN he will probably return to Greyhouse, and supply some more tales of that excellent school.

"Gipsy."—An open-air girl of the right kind. Ah, how nice it must be at sunny St. Ives in this weather! Your friend won't thank you for calling his school "Sherbourne." Unlike St. Ives, it has no *u* in it.

"Helen."—You are a delightful girl, full of fun, and your tongue wags at no end of a pace. You are sixteen, have brown eyes, and are slightly freckled.

"Oiseau."—Our competitions must appeal to the majority of readers. A golfers' competition, even in the event of our being able to think of a practicable one, would only appeal to a limited number.

"Jumbo."—You are steady, industrious, sincere, and ought to do well in life.

"Old Reader," Percy Day, and A. W. M. You will see we have corrected our statement.

Other Correspondents.—I am compelled to leave a number of letters unanswered till next month. All Correspondents who want their characters "told" must enclose Sixpence for my MONEY-BOX FUND.

Letters, &c., have also to be acknowledged from: K. R. Brandon (Jamaica), "A Loyal Captainite," Morley Ewins.

THE OLD FAG.

NOTICE!

The Old Fag's Money-box.—*Collecting cards can be had on application. Collectors of £2 or over will be awarded autographed copies of books by* CAPTAIN *authors—to be selected by themselves.*

Results of October Competitions.

No. I.—"Spelling Reform."

One age limit: Twenty-five.

WINNER OF COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE: Percy Hartill, Manor House, Willenhall, Staffs.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Andrew Whitehill, 8 Grafton Square, Glasgow, Scotland.

HONOURABLE MENTION: John Y. Morris, Sydney Barton, Alex. Scott, John E. Bennett, B. C. Curling, C. O. Griffiths, E. W. Stagg, E. S. Taverner, D. Ray, P. Eustace Petter, Percival Agnew, Charles W. Care.

No. II.—"Famous British Statesmen."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF A. G. SPALDING AND BROS. "OFFICIAL LEAGUE" FOOTBALL: John Wilson Hays, Clarence House, Wingate, co. Durham.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Walter S. Leeming, 47 Hazelbank Road, Catford, S.E.

HONOURABLE MENTION: William Ross, G. W. R. Take, Arthur S. Bowyer, E. H. G. Shepherd, W. J. Juleff, Thomas Bennett, Jack H. Gamble, Ralph Jackson, Andrew Browning, George E. Hughes, Alex. E. Miller, A. B. Stewart.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF A. G. SPALDING AND BROS. "OFFICIAL LEAGUE" FOOTBALL: J. B. Greaves, 12 St. John's Crescent, Canton, Cardiff.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Stuart E. Machin, 29 Claremont Road, Bishopston, Bristol.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Arthur B. Chester, Wallace Bridgeman, Leslie Mathews, Leslie Carr, Eric T. Cowan, H. K. Gibsone, Jessie M. Laing, Frank A. Knott, A. M. Bischer, A. R. Burnett-Hurst, Allan W. Thew, James D. Mitchell.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Twelve.)

WINNER OF A. G. SPALDING AND BROS. "OFFICIAL LEAGUE" FOOTBALL: Cecil L. M. Brown, Hose, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Thomas Montgomery, 1 Helsby Street, Sutton Oak.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Denis Wilson, Elsie Herring, Herbert D. Dawes, George E. Step, P. K. Perkin, Herbert W. Hardisty, Noel Carrington, Basil Cooper, Bertie McKeand, W. Rhodes, H. Godber.

No. III.—"Photographic Competition."

CLASS I. (No age limit.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: R. W. Copeman, Toun View, Wincanton.

HONOURABLE MENTION: C. J. Hankinson, W. J. Blyth, A. Lenton Pentelow, H. F. Woods, J. W. Potter, R. F. Sewell, E. B. Holmes, Claude Meader.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: Mabel Walker, High Street, Redbourn, Herts.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Edwin G. Bowers, 5 Northbank Terrace, Kelvinside, Glasgow.

HONOURABLE MENTION: R. W. Jowsey, Charles Adams, Dorothy Oldis, B. Meldrum, John Gray, Edgar Hart, Francis Theakston, Mab Dallimer, T. R. Burrell, C. Cotton, W. L. Taylor, J. B. Witcombe, William Chitcuti.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF PRIZE: George Crow, 15 Birdsall Row, Redcar.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: N. C. Bagster, 105 Wood Vale, Honor Oak, S.E.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Winifred Hughes, W. L. Buchanan, Elsie Moore, J. A. Talbot, Richard Barlow, W. E. Brigden, W. Huggan, Jnr., L. G. Troup, Norman Lea, E. C. Long, G. F. Bourne, A. Quin.

No. IV.—"Drawing Competition.

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF HOUGHTONS' "SCOUT" CAMERA: William Ringham, 173 Wells Road, Bristol.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: S. Gordon Browne, 32 Girdlers Road, West Kensington, W.

HONOURABLE MENTION: W. C. Boswell, W. H. Sheppard, J. T. Gillott, Hugh Graham, H. T. Grieve, F. S. Kerr, T. A. Morris, H. J. Simkin, C. L. Mackay, J. R. Knowles, W. J. P. McDowell, Dorothy Tyrrell, J. M. McLachlan, G. McGregor, Jnr., F. C. Millington, Roy Lyne, A. V. Penn, J. F. Dalrymple, D. E. Tyler, G. L. Roberts, J. H. Brocklesby.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF HOUGHTON'S "SCOUT" CAMERA: B. Frederick Oldham, 79 Lancaster Street, Belgrave, Leicester.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Cecil G. Ruck, Westcombe, Maidstone.

HONOURABLE MENTION: E. Vawdrey, L. Devine, H. R. Ransom, L. W. Millar, F. R. C. Newnham, S. D. Percy, G. A. Mercer, J. D. Henderson, D. McKeand, Nancy W. Huntly, Avelyn H. Smith, S. W. Lefeaux, R. W. Carter, Sybil Vincent, S. Fry, Elsie Price.

No. V.—"Handwriting Competition."

One age limit: Twelve.

WINNERS OF POSTCARD ALBUMS: Norman Nuel Lord, Helmsley, 16 Thornsett Road, Anerley, S.E.; S. O. Saint, 81 Tollington Park, Finsbury Park, N.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Daisy B. Neilson, Marlienbank, Moniaive, Dumfriesshire.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Vernon West, Harold B. Waters, Ellinor James, Nellie George, Dorothy Dare, Gladys E. Brown, Arthur C. Herrick, Boydell Lloyd, Charles Potter, A. R. Layton, Dorothy M. Durno.

No. VI.—"The Great Heat."

CLASS I. (No age limit.)

WINNER OF "SWAN" FOUNTAIN PEN: Selwyn, Edwards, St. John's Vicarage, West Bromwich, Staffs.

WINNER OF COPY OF "COX'S COUGH-DROPS": W. E. Raistrick, 114 Garfield Road, Nottingham.

HONOURABLE MENTION: John Y. Morris, Mary D. Hunter, Samuel J. Giles, A. A. Kerridge, F. W. Goddard, Nellie Kennedy, W. Francis, D. Campbell.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF "SWAN" FOUNTAIN PEN: Cecil W. Cooke, 47 Mount View Road, Crouch Hill, N.

WINNER OF COPY OF "COX'S COUGH-DROPS": W. H. Gillman, The Brittox, Devizes, Wilts.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Chas. Lewis, Carlyle Hebbert, Helen Hillyer, G. B. Hindmarsh, T. R. Davis, B. C. Curling, Katharine Wann, Benjamin Corbyn, Irene Lalonde, Mary E. Thomson, C. P. C. Young, Gladys G. Burrows.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF "SWAN" FOUNTAIN PEN: Hubert Phillips, "Brynelli," Coleshill Terrace, Llanelly.

WINNER OF COPY OF "COX'S COUGH-DROPS": Sybil Vincent, Tanglewood, West Hill, Epsom, Surrey.

HONOURABLE MENTION: R. S. White, Maurice Banister, A. Lesli Cranfield, E. W. Stagg, E. Allison Peers, W. A. House, René Evans, C. W. Hewitt, T. Marston, A. F. Webster, M. Runciman, Margaret Tulloch.

Foreign and Colonial Readers (August).

No. I.—WINNER OF 5s.: E. J. Doole, Cambridge Terrace, Unley, South Australia.

No. II.—WINNER OF 5s.: Angus J. H. McColl, The Woods, Newlands Avenue, Newlands, Cape Town, South Africa.

HONOURABLE MENTION: S. S. Phalke (India), Arnold Foote (Jamaica), Octavus Freislich (South Africa), Arthur Troye (South Africa), B. D. Mookerjea (India), K. Whitman (Canada), B. A. Spence (St. Vincent), Raynes Evans (Jamaica), R. Everard (India), C. Oehley (Natal), Merlin T. Flint (Cape Colony), Gordon E. Jovely (South Australia), Dugald McIntyre (Natal).

No. III.—WINNER OF 5s.: B. Shorney, Hall Street, Semaphore, South Australia.

HONOURABLE MENTION: L. K. Davidson (Jamaica), Leslie H. Burket (Canada), R. S. Johnson (India), Anno Fredericks (South Africa), Jack Loutet (Canada), Eurella Fulton (Canada), G. G. Proctor (Trinidad), J. K. Cronyn (Canada), P. J. Burke (Newfoundland), J. M. Nethersole (Jamaica), Ivy Davis (British Guiana), R. D. Mookerjea (India), G. N. Cross (Transvaal).

No. IV.—WINNER OF 5s.: Walter J. Goodbrand, Talana Villa, Windermere Road, Stamford Hill, Durban, South Africa.

HONOURABLE MENTION: C. Sorzano (Trinidad), Margery C. Hutson (Barbados), Harry M. Bridwell (U.S.A.).

No. V.—WINNER OF 5s.: Charles Inkster, Nile Street, Port Adelaide, South Australia.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Leslie H. Burket, M. L. Whitman (Canada), N. V. Tonkin (Transvaal).

No. VI.—WINNER OF 5s.: K. R. Brandon, Audit Office, Kingston, Jamaica.

HONOUARBLE MENTION: Egerton W. Melville (Jamaica), Leslie H. Burket.

Winners of Consolation Prizes are requested to inform the Editor which they would prefer—a volume of one of our magazines, or one of the following books: "Cox's Cough-Drops." "The Duffer." "The Rising of the Red Man," "The Good Bat," "J. O. Jones."

Comments on the October Competitions.

No. I.—The majority of the competitors apparently understood neither the conditions of the competition nor the proposed reform itself. The entries generally have supplied the strongest argument that we have yet seen against such a reform.

No. II.—A correct list will be found on an advertisement page. Judging by the enormous number of entries, this type of competition is even more popular than ever with our readers. A large proportion of competitors sent in correct solutions to all pictures, so that the senders of the neatest lists had the advantage. Pictures No. 4 and 11 were the most difficult—Vane, Brodrick, and Pride being the solutions of many for the former, and O'Connell and Cecil for the latter.

Nos. III. & IV.—The excellence of the drawings submitted made up for the rather poor quality of the photos. that reached us.

No. V.—Quite a number of very good attempts were sent in, the handwriting of competitors aged eleven and twelve being particularly good. Our younger readers need have no fears about entering for this competition, as age will be taken into consideration.

No. VI.—A popular competition. The hottest day apparently made a great impression, and many interesting accounts of their doings were sent in by competitors.—THE COMPETITION EDITOR.

P.C.: "If I catch you again, I——"
URCHIN: "Yer ain't caught me the first time yet."

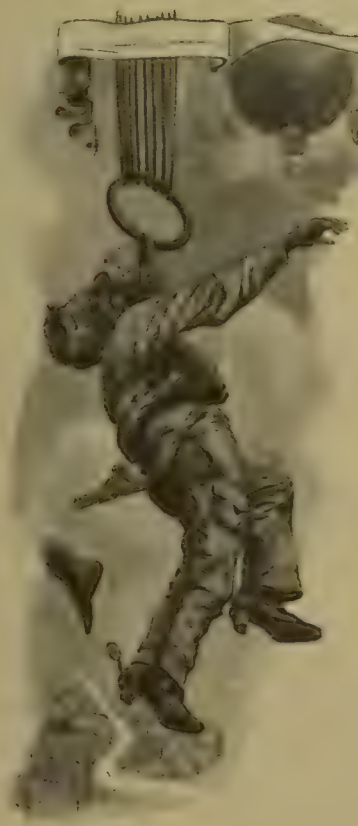
Drawn by Edgar Miller.

"GO!"

THE CAPTAIN

A MAGAZINE FOR BOYS AND "OLD BOYS"

VOL. XVI. JANUARY, 1907 No. 94.



A MAD WAGER

By GEORGE SIMPSON.

Illustrated by John de Walton.

DURING the famous World's Fair at Chicago in 1893 I was employed—together with some hundred and fifty other cowboys, "broncho busters," and horsemen of all nations—in Col. W. F. Cody's ("Buffalo Bill") "Congress of Roughriders of the World," which was located within a stone's throw of the Fair ground. We were all of us a devil-may-care, happy-go-lucky lot, and were bent on having a good time and enjoying ourselves to the full, and consequently the games we used to get up to every night after our show was done were somewhat riotous.

In the show there were a number of little cliques, consisting sometimes of five or six, sometimes of twenty or more "boys," who were inseparables, sharing rough and smooth together and keeping side by side in work and play. The particular clique to which I belonged consisted of eight of us, and it was our invariable custom every night after the show to get into "store" clothes and go up town to one of the hotels, where we would yarn and meet friends from all quarters of the globe. Our usual haunt was the Palmer House Hotel, in the smoking-room of which were often to be met some of the notabilities of Western commerce rubbing shoulders with miners fresh from the Yukon and California, and cattlemen from Nebraska and the Dakotas—in fact, all sorts and conditions of men, for there is no city in the United States in which so many nationalities are to be encountered as Chicago, which is, from its very position, to all intents and purposes a human clearing-house for the whole of the country.

Amongst the many "side shows" and attractions of the Fair, a balloon ascent and parachute descent by the well-known aeronauts, Frank Maclain and Harold Grinley, was prominent. Every day, when the weather was favourable, a balloon ascent was made, and one or other of the partners would descend by means of a parachute. Both aeronauts were staying at the Palmer House, and I had had several brief chats with them prior to the meeting which resulted in the making of the wager which I am about to describe.

On the evening of which I write Grinley, Maclain and six or seven of our "boys," with myself, were gathered in a corner of the

big smoking-room, discussing the topics of the day, and during a conversation regarding parachuting, I asked Grinley what it felt like when he cut loose from the balloon and made his drop of two or three hundred feet; for the parachute does not open immediately it separates from the balloon, but falls like a stone for some considerable distance.

"To tell you the truth," he said, in answer to my query, "I've never attempted to analyse my feelings. You see, I was brought up to the business, and made my first jump such a long while ago that I've forgotten what it felt like; and after you've made one jump you seem to do the others quite mechanically. It comes just as a matter of course. You go up, cut loose when you've reached the proper altitude, come down, pack up your parachute, and go home to lunch with no more thought than an ordinary business man goes about his day's work with. Frank, there, says he felt as if he'd been upset out of a boat into a river the first jump he made, but, as I've said, the whole show is over so quickly that one hasn't time to think or attempt to analyse one's feelings."

What mad impulse it was which prompted me to make the retort I did goodness only knows, but before I knew what I was doing I found myself saying, "Well, I'm rather fond of novel sensations, and I'd like to make a jump for myself, to see what it feels like. I fancy I could do it all right."

"Oh, you could *do* it all right!" retorted Grinley; "any fool could! But whether you'd have the nerve to go through with it or not I don't know. I've had lots of folks *say* they'd like to try it, but when it comes to the point they've always backed down at the last minute, and I should say you'd do the same. You Britishers haven't much 'sand' when it comes to our business."

Something in his tone nettled me, for there was a sneer on his face as he spoke, and I burst out impetuously, "I'll bet you any money you like I'll go through with it."

"I'll lay you an even five hundred dollars you daren't," he said.

"Done!" I cried, whipping my pocket-book out and counting out the greenbacks I had about me. "I've not got that amount on me, though. Here, you boys, lend me some paper," and I turned to my chums, who soon made up the requisite amount, which was covered by Grinley, and the whole amount handed over to Mr. Wyatt, the hotel manager, to hold pending the result.

Then we started to talk things over, and it was arranged that I should make my jump the next morning, Maclain accompanying me in the balloon to see that everything was all right.

It is one thing to make a bet in the heat of an argument and another to carry it out in cold blood, and by the time I had got to my room at the hotel I was staying at and got cooled down a bit, I began to wish myself anywhere but where I was. I had openly declared myself willing to perform a feat which I knew to be a risky and dangerous one, and had deposited the stakes, made up of my own and my chums' money, to guarantee its fulfilment. But was I capable of carrying the thing through? Had I the requisite pluck? I began to doubt it. The mere thought of that awful fall through the air made me shiver, and I began trying to recall all I had heard and read regarding the fatal accidents which had befallen balloonists and parachutists from time to time. But then Grinley's sneering remark about Britishers not having much "sand" seemed to brace me up, for I felt that in a measure the credit of my country was at stake, and I determined that, come what might, I would go through with the thing to the bitter end and make the jump. Frankly, had it not been for the fact that I was under contract with Col. Cody, and that I could not afford to lose the 500 dollars which I had paid down, I think I should have got my things together and taken the first train I could catch away from Chicago; but the money had been paid over and represented my chums' confidence in me, and the contract, so far as I was concerned, must be fulfilled.

I spent some considerable time writing a few letters in case anything should happen, and then, almost at daybreak, turned into bed, to dream of mad rushes through space, and frightful falls, in which I never seemed to reach the ground.

The news of the wager had got round, and before I was awake my room was besieged by newspaper men, asking for interviews, or wanting me to write my experiences for their papers after the jump. One of them went so far as to request details concerning my past career, in case an obituary notice was wanted, and added cheerfully, "You might give me your people's address in the old country as well, for I'll be real pleased to cable them in case you get smashed." Which shows the lengths to which "yellow" journalists will go. I promptly kicked my interrogator out of the room, and after a

bath went down to breakfast. My chums all stuck to me, like the good fellows they were, and under the influence of their cheerful society I began to recover my spirits and beget more confidence as to successfully accomplishing the feat I had set myself to perform.

Breakfast over, we went in a body to the Fair grounds, to watch the preparations for the ascent. Grinley and Maclain were both there before us, however, the former wearing the costume he usually jumped in. Noticing my questioning look he said, "Oh! I never reckoned you'd turn up, so thought I might as well be ready to go up myself."

The ascent was timed for noon, and so we spent our time hanging round, Maclain going to considerable trouble to explain the various uses of the ropes, valves, etc. to me.

Little by little the huge silken bag which was to bear me aloft assumed a definite shape as the gas filled it, and the crowd began to assume pretty considerable dimensions, for the morning papers had given prominence to the affair, heading the news "An Englishman's Mad Wager," "To jump 5000 feet," etc., and by the time the balloon was ready some 15,000 people must have been on the ground.

An ordinary balloon with a car attached was to be used, the parachute being suspended from the side of the gas bag by a slender cord fastened with a snap catch which would release it when any heavy weight was thrown on it, the ring to which I was to hold coming into the car of the balloon, where it was made fast.

The final preparations were made, the last goodbye said, and after being nearly mobbed by my chums, I tumbled into the car, and Maclain gave the order to let go. Almost before I could realise it, we were sailing up gradually and smoothly. I had never been in a balloon before, and the novelty of it served to distract my thoughts from the task before me.

We did not seem to be moving at all. The earth seemed to be slowly dropping away from us; buildings and houses appeared to sink into the ground, the people to fade away until they were no bigger than ants, whilst there was borne up to us faintly, as if it were an echo, the sound of shouts and cheering. Fascinated, I watched the country open out under us, Lake Michigan looking like an enormous sheet of burnished metal throwing off the rays of the sun; the rivers and streams seeming so many silver threads. Maclain was busy taking photographs, and I was free to look enthralled at the wonderful view which unfolded itself beneath me. Had I not known that I was in a balloon I should not have believed it, for there was no swaying or perceptible motion of any sort.

"Well! What do you think of it, Sonnie?" said Maclain, at last, breaking the silence. "Great! isn't it?"

"It's marvellous, glorious!" I said, and I meant it, for I was impressed as I had never been before.

"You'd better be getting ready," was his next remark. "I'm going to send you off at five thousand feet, and we're about four thousand now." He glanced at the aneroid, and the preparations for my jump began.

First of all he passed a stout leather strap securely round my body below my arms, bringing the ends up to the ring attached to the parachute—"in case you feel sick and inclined to go down alone," he said apologetically as he made it fast; but seeing the look on my face, for I did not like being strapped up like this, he added, hurriedly, "But you won't do that; you've got too much grit, whatever Harold said."

I submitted to the strapping, therefore—although I must admit the idea of pinioning a man prior to execution struck me as being somewhat similar—and Maclain then proceeded to give me my final instructions.

"Take hold of the ring and hang on tight," he said; "stand on the edge of the car—I'll hold you—and jump when I tell you. Take a good leap, and don't be scared; you'll be all right."

I certainly did feel scared, very scared indeed, and wished myself anywhere but where I was; but it was no good wishing, and so I did as he bade me, taking hold of the parachute ring with one hand whilst I hung on to one of the guy ropes supporting the car with the other.

Maclain kept his eye on the aneroid, calling off the heights as we ascended, "Four thousand eight hundred, four thousand nine hundred. Get ready, and jump well out when I say 'Go.' Five thousand! Hang on, shut your eyes, and whatever you do, for Heaven's sake don't look down. Good luck. *Go!*"

He gave me a slight push, and almost before the last warning sentence had left his lips I shut my eyes and jumped, with an unspoken prayer in my heart for a safe descent. There was a slight jerky click above me as the parachute freed itself from the balloon, and

AS FAR AS I COULD JUDGE I WAS STILL SOME FOUR THOUSAND FEET HIGH.

then I felt myself falling down, down, down with a speed which I could not, dare not, think of, the air rushing up around me with a noise like the roaring of a gale. Why didn't the parachute open? Had anything gone wrong with it? Maclain had told me it would open in a few seconds, and yet I seemed to have been falling for over a minute. Still I rushed downwards, and there was no diminution in my speed. My heart was pounding at my ribs with the noise of a sledge hammer; the cold perspiration poured off me, wetting me through and through. My mouth became parched and dry, and I felt as if I was choking, while a blood-red mist swam before my closed eyes. And still I fell down and down, like a meteorite from the heavens. Another minute passed; I counted the seconds as I rushed through the air. Would the parachute *never* open? Was this the end? I must be getting near the ground! Would it hurt, or would it soon be over? Was this death? My thoughts flew back over the thousands of miles of land and sea to my far-away home in the old country that I should never see again. What would my people say when they heard the news? In my distress of mind I babbled wildly, wishing for the end to come. It was this agony of anticipation which was so terrible, so hard to bear. Could I not throw myself free and end it sooner? I let go my hold of the ring, but the strap held me there. I must wait the end. Good heavens! would it never come?

Suddenly there was a faint flapping sound above me, followed by a jerk, and the speed of my fall was perceptibly lessened. The parachute had opened at last! I was saved! In my relief I laughed and shouted and cried. I was saved — saved from an awful death. I was descending slowly and steadily, swaying gently from side to side in the breeze, and turning a little as the parachute rocked.

But in the middle of my thankfulness at my safety came another thought that reawoke all the old terrors of my first rush through the air. I had been falling for three or four minutes before the parachute opened, and must now be very near the ground. Would my speed be checked sufficiently before I reached it, or should I be dashed to pieces after all? Suppose I

struck a building in my descent—or dropped into the Lake! What then?

If it was the Lake, I should be drowned like a rat, for fastened as I was the parachute would be sure to overwhelm me and keep me down. Had I escaped one death only to meet another almost as terrible? I felt that come what might I must look down, must know what the end would be. So, trembling in every limb, I opened my eyes and looked beneath me.

As far as I could judge I was still some four thousand feet high, and was sinking slowly, almost imperceptibly, to earth. I was over open country, drifting along in the gentle summer breeze. I was indeed saved. Over my head the parachute was spread open to its full extent, looking like some gigantic umbrella, a faint hissing noise showing where the air was escaping through the outlet at the top. The earth seemed to be slowly coming up to meet me. Gradually the scene below me assumed definite shape; houses and buildings seemed to rise out of the ground and take form, until I could distinguish places I knew. I saw the crowd hurrying along, following the direction in which I was drifting; while almost level with me, about half a mile away, was the balloon, dropping gently to earth. In a few moments I reached the ground, my feet striking with no more force than if I had jumped off a six-foot wall. My journey was over—I was safe once more!

Disentangling myself from the parachute, I undid the strap which held me, and by the time the crowd had reached the spot where I had fallen I had in a measure, at any rate outwardly, regained some of my composure.

Maclain came to earth safely with the balloon about a mile away, and leaving his assistants to see to the deflating and packing of it, hurried over and joined me, and we chartered a carriage and made our way back to the Fair ground, where I received an enthusiastic reception.

Talking the matter over in the smoking-room of the Palmer House that night after the show, I told Maclain how I felt during the first two or three minutes of my fall. "Minutes!" he exclaimed. "Why, man alive, the parachute opened three seconds after you jumped! I timed it on the stop watch."

Three seconds! and I had lived years in them!

Thus did I carry out my promise, and win 500 dollars, but I went through an experience which I would not undergo again for five hundred times that amount.

THE CRY OF THE SENIOR WRANGLER.

It was the Senior Wrangler,
And a mighty oath he swore—
"By square and cube, by Routh and Webb,
They'll rue this day full sore.

Abolish me! How can they dare?
They soon shall change their tune,
For I'll my doughty henchman call,
My faithful "Wooden-Spoon."

And he will summon all his Peers,
"The Wooden-Spoons"—a crowd,
And together storm the Senate House,
Where some of us were ploughed.

Then come my gallant Senior Ops!
I call you from your ease—
For once before we fought, the day
Of women—Their degrees.

And first the traitor Forsyth's head,
We'll spike upon the rails:
And all the "Placet" crew we'll send
To 'Varsities in Wales.

And I will lead the foremost ranks,
And "Wooden-Spoon" the rear:
The shade of mighty Cayley will
Else spur us on and cheer!

Let men reform the Classicists,
Or Law or Poll degree—
But we are made of sterner stuff,
Who live by Rule of Three.

T. G. O.

THE STAMPS OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

THE colony of Newfoundland has been very much in evidence of late. It is the natural custodian of the finest fishing rights in the world. The total value of cod-fish caught and exported is close on two millions sterling. For many generations France claimed a large share in those fishing rights, but by the treaty concluded with France in 1904, which paved the way for the *entente cordiale*, France renounced her rights on what is termed the French shore, with the exception of cleaning and drying fish on shore, but retained the right of fishing in the territorial waters of the French shore and secured for her fishermen the right to obtain supplies of bait on that coast and the right to fish, not only for cod, but for lobsters. Recently, troubles have arisen with fishermen from the United States, and these are now being amicably settled.

The fishing-grounds are principally off the coast of Labrador and the Great Banks lying to the South of Newfoundland. These banks are really submerged plateaux, and are about 600 miles in length and 200 in breadth.

Hence the fisheries are the leading industries of the colony, though of late attempts have been made to develop its mineral resources. Coal and iron are said to exist side by side near the west coast, but their development is greatly hampered by claims set up by the French to a right to use the strand for drying fish "free from interruption"; and these claims are regarded as seriously impeding mining operations in several parts of the island.

The island of Newfoundland is triangular in shape. Its history begins with its discovery by John Cabot in the reign of Henry VII. Cabot was a native of Genoa, and like Columbus had a great ambition to discover new lands beyond the seas. After his services had been declined by Spain and Portugal he came to England in 1491, and secured for himself and his three sons a roving commission from Henry VII. to sail the high seas and annex for England any unknown country they might discover. So they sailed in a ship called the *Matthew* from Bristol in 1497, and in June of that year sighted Newfoundland. On their return to England they received out of the privy purse the munificent sum of £10, which payment was duly entered in the national accounts as having been paid to "hym that found the New Isle."

Since then the "New Isle" has prospered by virtue of its valuable fisheries, which were opened up as early as the sixteenth century. At first the fishing was mainly in the hands of the French and Spaniards, till Sir Humphrey Gilbert, in 1583, took possession of the island in the name of Queen Elizabeth.

In 1855 a responsible government was established, and it is now ruled by a Governor with a Legislative Council of fifteen members appointed by the Crown, and a House of Assembly of thirty-six members elected for four years by manhood suffrage and the ballot.

The population in 1901, including the portion of Labrador administered by the colony, was 220,984. The capital, St. John's, has a population of 30,000.

Its Philatelic History.

The Philatelic history of Newfoundland stretches back to the early days of postal issues, for its first postage stamps were designed, engraved and printed by Messrs. Perkins, Bacon and Co., and were issued on January 1, 1857. That first issue consisted of nine values, which comprised a mixture of designs of square, rectangular and triangular shapes, and, strange to say, the name of the capital, St. John's, was added to the name of the colony in the design of each stamp. Since that first issue there have

been several succeeding issues, all marked by great variety of designs. Altogether the list of stamps provided by this little colony totals up to over forty separate designs.

Its first issue ranks amongst the great rarities of stamp-collecting, but the later issues are fairly well within the reach of the average collector. For many years what may be termed the middle issues of Newfoundland were obtainable at comparatively low prices because of large stocks of remainders. One Canadian authority tells us that "in every change that was made there was more or less of the preceding issue left, and the Newfoundland post-office department certainly never lost any money on their remainders." These remainders have been exhausted, and dealers find it every year more difficult to replenish their stocks. The variety and picturesqueness of the various issues have made them great favourites with collectors, but now that the sources of supply are practically drying up, the present low prices cannot last much longer. An appreciable proportion of these middle issues were very badly centred in the matter of perforations.

1857.—Nine values. Designs: the 1*d.* and 5*d.* of the same design with crown in the centre and the rose, shamrock and thistle around; the 2*d.* and 1*s.* are alike with a combination of the rose, shamrock and thistle in the centre; the 3*d.* is of triangular shape with emblems grouped in circles in the centre; the 4*d.*, 6*d.* and 8*d.* are of similar design, and the 6½*d.* is of separate, but still similar, pattern. Designed, engraved and printed by Messrs. Perkins, Bacon and Co. The paper was not watermarked, nor were the stamps perforated.

No wmk. Imperf.

	Unused. £	s.	d.		Used. £	s.	d.
1*d.*, reddish purple	0	7	6	..	0	17	6
2*d.*, scarlet-vermilion	—			..	10	0	0
3*d.*, green	0	12	6	..	1	0	0
4*d.*, scarlet-vermilion	—			..	7	0	0
5*d.*, reddish purple	1	5	0	..	1	10	0
6*d.*, scarlet-vermilion	—			..	10	0	0
6½*d.*, „ „	13	0	0	..	14	0	0
8*d.*, „ „	1	10	0	..	2	10	0
1*s.*, „ „	—			..	16	0	0

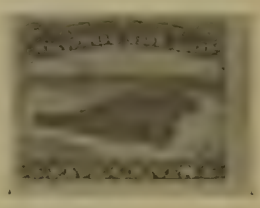
1861-2. — Eight values. Designs: the same, but colours slightly changed. No watermark, and imperforate as before.

Colours changed.

No wmk. Imperf.

	Unused. s.	d.		Used. s.	d.
1*d.*, purple-brown	20	0	..		
2*d.*, lake	20	0	..		
4*d.*, „	3	6	..	15	0
5*d.*, brown	7	6	..	20	0
6*d.*, lake	2	6	..	7	6
6½*d.* „	8	6	..	30	0
8*d.* „	12	0	..	—	
1*s.* „	5	0	..	30	0

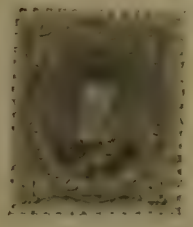
1866.—In 1865 the English currency of the colony was discarded in favour of the decimal system, and we are told that in those days the colony had no coinage of its own and any and all coins were in circulation. Of this first issue with the values expressed in "cents" there were six values, and each value was of a separate design. The 2c. showed a cod-fish swimming; the 5c. a seal on an ice-floe, with icebergs in the background; the 10c. a full-face portrait of the Prince of Wales in military uniform; the 12c. a diademed profile of Queen Victoria to left, with the name of the colony and the value in a surrounding oval garter; the 13c. a schooner sailing to the right; and the 24c. a full-faced diademed portrait of Queen Victoria. Those stamps were designed, engraved and printed by the American Bank Note Company, and were printed on unwatermarked paper and perforated.



No wmk. Perf

	Unused.			Used.	
	s.	d.		s.	d.
2c., yellow-green	10	0	..	10	0
5c., brown	25	0	..	25	0
10c., black	10	0	..	10	0
12c., orange-brown	30	0	..	10	0
13c., orange-yellow	6	0	..	5	0
24c., blue	3	6	..	5	0

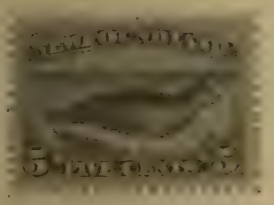
1868-73.—Four values. Designs: the 1c. a three-quarter-face portrait of the Prince of Wales in Highland costume; the 3c. and 6c. a portrait of Queen Victoria in widow's weeds to right; and the 5c. design as in previous issue, but the colour changed from brown to black. Designed, engraved and printed by the American Bank Note Co. on unwatermarked paper and perforated. Those collectors who go in for varieties of perforation will note that the 1c., 2c. (of 1866), 3c. and 5c. were subsequently issued rouletted instead of perforated. The 3c. first issued in orange-vermilion was subsequently changed in colour to blue.



No wmk. Perf.

	Unused.			Used.	
	s.	d.		s.	d.
1c., purple	4	6	..	5	0
3c., orange-vermilion	15	0	..	15	0
3c., blue	7	6	..	3	0
5c., black	20	0	..	10	0
6c., dull rose	1	0	..	1	0

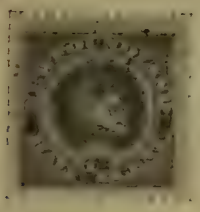
1880.—Four values. Designs: the 1c. similar to the previous issue but modified, the value at top being included in the oval band, instead of being in a ribbon across the upper part of the stamp; the 2c. was of the cod-fish design of 1886, but with a different framework, figures of value in lower corners only, instead of in all four corners, and the words of value in the lower curve instead of at each side as well; the 3c. is of the same design as in the 1868–73 issue, but printed in a paler blue: and the 5c. is a redrawn improvement of the 5c. seal of the 1866 issue. These stamps were designed, engraved and printed by the British-American Bank Note Co. of Montreal—a Canadian branch of the American Bank Note Co. of New York.



No wmk. Perf.

	Unused.			Used.	
	s.	d.		s.	d.
1c., purple	0	6	..	0	9
2c., yellow-green	0	9	..	—	
3c., sky-blue	—		..	0	8
5c., „	3	6	..	0	6

1887.—Five values. Designs: the ½c. a small square stamp with the head of a Newfoundland dog within a circular band inscribed with the name of the colony and the value; the 1c. of the last issue, but changed in colour from purple to green; the 2c. of the last issue, changed from yellow-green to orange-vermilion; the 3c. of the last issue changed from sky-blue to deep brown; and a 10c. of new schooner design. All designed, engraved and printed as before by the British-American Bank Note Co. of Montreal, on unwatermarked paper and perforated.



No wmk. Perf.

	Unused. s.	d.		Used. s.	d.
½c., rose-red	0	2	..	0	2
1c., green	0	2	..	0	3
2c., orange-vermilion	0	3	..	0	3
3c., deep brown	1	0	..	0	2
10c., black	1	3	..	1	6

1890.—Two values. Designs: the ½c. of the last series, but changed in colour from rose-red to black, and a new design for the 3c. as illustrated. Designed, engraved and printed by the British American Bank Note Co. of Montreal, on unwatermarked paper and perforated. The 3c. of this issue yields the specialist a fine range of shades, varying from slate-grey to mauve.

No wmk. Perf.

	Unused. s.	d.		Used. s.	d.
½c., black	0	2	..	0	2
3c., slate	1	0	..	0	2
3c., mauve	1	0	..	—	

1890-7.—Seven values. Old designs in new colours.

No wmk. Perf.

	Unused. s.	d.		Used. s.	d.
½c., vermilion	0	6	..		
1c., green	0	8	..	0	8
1c., brown	0	9	..	0	6
3c., deep blue	10	0	..	1	0
3c., brown	1	6	..	1	6
5c., sky-blue	1	6	..	1	6
6c., crimson lake	0	8	..	0	8
12c., brown lake	2	0	..		

Next month I propose to deal with the later issues.

My thanks are due to Messrs. Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., for the loan of picked specimens from their stock for illustrating this article.

Reviews.

New Albums.

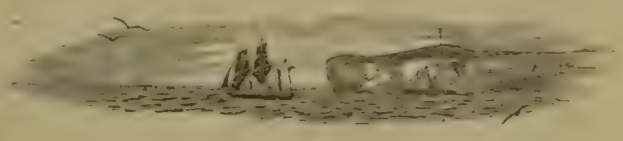
MESSRS BRIGHT AND SON send me a copy of an excellent and cheap new album which they have just published for the stamps of Great Britain. It consists of eighty-four leaves printed on one side only, illustrated with 155 photographic reproductions of stamps. Minor varieties are made clear by means of enlarged illustrations. The watermarks are fully illustrated, and spaces are provided for all plate numbers, varieties of shade and cancellation. The size of the page is 11 in. by 8½ in., and the prices range according to binding from 6*s.* to 10*s.*

I can thoroughly recommend this excellent album to any reader of THE CAPTAIN who is specialising in the issues of Great Britain, now so very popular with the great majority of collectors.

Messrs. Ernest Wood and Co., of Chorlton-cum-Hardy, send a series of four of their recently published "Utile" albums in various styles and bindings, ranging in price from 1*s.* 4*d.* to 3*s.* 9*d.*, and making provision for from 6000 to 12,000 stamps. The shape is oblong and the leaves are provided with guards to prevent bulging when well filled with stamps.

The Stamp Market.

From Messrs. Ernest Wood and Co., Chorlton-cum-Hardy, we have a neat and excellently illustrated price list of postage stamps, albums, sets and packets, and we note that the sets are confined to adhesive postage stamps, excluding fiscal stamps, post-card, wrapper and envelope stamps now rarely included in a general collection. The illustrations of postage stamps are exceptionally clear. Seven pages of Penny Sets provide quite a new feature in stamp-dealing. We had no idea such a long and tempting list of penny sets could be made, some including as many as ten stamps, all different, for one penny. Quite a representative little collection might be made up out of these penny sets.



A Soldier's Life. By P. J. Thorpe.

IV. IN CAMP.

THE soldier in his tented dwelling is one of the happiest mortals alive—his allotted space in the tent is, it is true, very limited, and he has many discomforts and inconveniences to put up with, but notwithstanding it all, he is always glad of a spell of camp life.

The canvas house usually provided for the soldier is that known as the "bell-tent," from its conical shape. On active service in India this is often discarded in favour of one of a more compact and portable description, known as the "routee" or hill-tent. This is a light field-service tent of the shape of an inverted V.

From eight to ten men are packed in a tent, according to circumstances—I use the term "packed" advisedly, for when the men are disposed inside the tent, they lie close together almost like sardines in a tin. Although much cramped for space there is much to be said in favour of this huddling together, for at night it promotes a comforting warmth, while the waterproof sheets form a general carpeting for the floor.

CLEANING THEIR ACCOUTREMENTS.

In standing camps tent-boards are supplied for the flooring and this adds considerably to the comfort of the little community, keeping the bedding from contact with the earth, and enabling the occupants to keep the tent well swept and clean. Many other little comforts are attached to standing camps, such as covered kitchens and other conveniences.

Life under canvas soon develops a sharp appetite, and this is provided for in the shape of extra rations, The meals are prepared almost under the eyes of the men, for the cooks' kitchens are usually located in close proximity to the rows of tents occupied by the men, care being taken that they are situated as far as possible from the officers' lines.

Much harmony prevails amongst the men under canvas—more so even than in barracks. By virtue of the enforced fellowship of a camp, confidences and friendships are begot, stories are told and retold, a spirit of cheerfulness and optimism is evoked, and from morn till night laughter, singing, and jovial chat are heard throughout the length and breadth of the camp.

For the safe-keeping of the rifles, an extemporised arm-rack is created by splicing tent-pegs to the pole. To these the rifles are fastened, and in this way they are kept securely in an erect position, and free from the sand and gravel which would otherwise find entrance through the muzzles and breech-actions, were the rifles allowed to lie prone upon the floor.

At night candles are served out to the tents, and are safeguarded from the accident of fire by being enclosed in lanterns. When tattoo is over, each bed made down and occupied, and the tent door securely tied up, there is nothing wanting in the way of snugness and warmth.

On fine days the under-part of the tent, known as the "flies," is unloosed from the peg-fastenings and rolled up, so as to allow such breeze as there may be to exercise its function of "airing" the dwelling. In clear, settled weather, especially on bright, sunny days, the tent and flooring boards are moved a few feet away, and the sun is allowed to shed its sanitary rays on the site of the men's sleeping-berths.

While this is going on, the soldiers may be observed sitting in the shade of the canvas cleaning their accoutrements, reading books and papers, writing letters, or enjoying a short nap. The ground is left thus exposed until the approach of sunset, when the tents are moved back to their former positions, and the men resume their normal mode of life.

Athletic games are much more patronised in camp than they are in barracks. The desire to free themselves from their cramped positions

in the tents, impels many to rush out into the open and seek exercise in some form or other. For this reason the football may be seen flying about at all seasons of the year—while in the cricket season as many as three or four "pitches" are utilised all day long in the vicinity of the camp.

If the outdoor life promotes a healthy appetite, it also unfortunately seems to generate a magnificent thirst, for no sooner does the hour arrive when the canteen-tent is thrown open, than a simultaneous rush is made for it, and the barmen are kept fully occupied till dinner-time. After the midday meal the canteen is again thronged, and continues so until the closing hour at night.

Wet days bring discomfort in their train. Not only are the men kept to their tents, but the traffic of many feet ploughs the ground up outside and turns it into a wilderness of mud. The men sit in their tents yarning and reading, and every now and then when one of them rises and unthinkingly strikes up against the side of the tent, a stream of water percolates the canvas where it has been touched, and the "absent-minded beggar" brings down on his poor head a volume of strong language from his deluged comrades.

It is customary in wet weather to slacken the ropes which secure the tents to the pegs, so as to relieve the tension of the canvas, while in rough, windy weather just the opposite course is followed, as the constant flapping of the canvas loosens the ropes, and unless this is watched and guarded against, it is no uncommon occurrence for the men to have the tent blown down about their ears.

But in fine sunny weather there are no such drawbacks to contend with, and the men lead an ideal existence. There are only one or two parades a day at most, and there is an entire absence of the fatigues attending a residence in barracks. The charm of living an outdoor life, with every want provided for, is not to be gainsaid, and it cannot be wondered at that the soldier who has once had a spell of camp life under such favourable conditions should

THE TENT BLOWN ABOUT THEIR EARS.

ever afterwards feel a hankering for its renewal.

After a month he finds himself as "fit as a fiddle." His physique and health have materially improved, care sits but lightly on his shoulders, his spirits become exalted, and he realises truly then what it is to be a soldier. Having virtually to shift for himself he grows more practical and self-reliant, and when camp breaks up and he returns to barracks, he has to acknowledge to himself that one of the happiest phases of soldiering is that spent under canvas.

THE CAMP.

A bugle call—the tramp of busy feet,
Red gleams of morn and quivering of heat,
A din, a rattle, odours appetising,
The stifled yawning of men's early rising,
A rub, a scrub, a fold, a turn, a shake—
The camp awake!

A misty moon, a stretch of shadowed ground,
The far-off baying of a sleepless hound,
The flap of canvas, and a breath of sighing,
The restless creak of heavy bodies lying,
Eyes calmly closed, and eyes that watchful keep—
The camp asleep!

FLORENCE HOARE.

IN SEARCH OF SMITH,

A Romance of Unexplored Australia.

By JOHN MACKIE.

Author of "The Rising of the Red Man," "The Heart of the Prairie," &c.

Illustrated by R. Caton Woodville.

SYNOPSIS.

Richard Payne, a retired surgeon, who in his earlier days had been connected with the Army, meets, at Southville Hydro., his old comrade, General Sir Donald Taylor, now also on the retired list. Sir Donald tells Payne that he is anxious to discover the whereabouts of a great friend of his named Smith, who according to the latest accounts was held captive by blacks in the unexplored region of the Northern territory of South Australia. The General prevails upon Payne to accompany him, and they set off to Australia together with Sir Donald's son, Jack, the latter's tutor, Maitland, and Parker, a manservant. On arriving in Australia they go to the house of the General's sister, whose daughter, Madge, is a typical specimen of the fearless bush girl. It is arranged that Madge shall avail herself of the expedition to visit friends on the MacArthur River, and the party starts. With the exception that the expedition narrowly escapes being cut up by blacks one night, all goes well with the search party, which makes good progress. When the expedition is nearing the MacArthur River, Jack Taylor goes for a ride one Sunday and, not far from camp, comes suddenly upon a shanty in which a man is lying under blankets, while close by stand Sam Holt and Bird, two of his father's teamsters. After some conversation with old Holt, Jack rides off, but his horse brings him back in a circle to the neighbourhood of the hut, and he overhears a conversation among the men which tells him that the teamsters have treacherous designs on the expedition. Furthermore, the man under the blankets is addressed as "Hawker," a notorious outlaw who is badly wanted by the police. Jack is riding off with the object of warning his father when from near by a rifle speaks, and a bullet whistles past his head.

CHAPTER X.—(*continued.*)

TABLE-TURNING EXTRAORDINARY.

IT might only have been fancy, but for a moment it seemed to him that he had caught a glimpse of an ugly, evil face glaring at him from among a broken screen of leaves.

There was no time for locating impressions, for the horse had bolted with the bit between its teeth, and it was all Jack could do to stay in the saddle. Much to his surprise, the horse had headed in the last direction he would have chosen. It dashed through the tangled undergrowth, just missing low overhanging branches and dodging tree stems in its gallop, until at last Jack found himself in open country, some distance from the range. He was in a terribly dilapidated condition, and his horse was in a lather. He reined up and made it walk. The bush was quite open now, and he could see a full hundred yards or so ahead. He could not be more than a mile or so from the camp, he told himself, for the horse bells were now quite audible. Then a voice that made him jump hailed him from a clump of bushes alongside.

"What ho, chummie!" it said. "What cheer, my hearty! Was that you a-firin'?"

Jack could hardly believe his eyes when he found himself alongside Sam Holt. Sam had dismounted, and his horse was grazing near.

He drew his revolver and levelled it straight at Sam's head.

"You blackguard!" he cried. "You shall pay dearly for this. Get into camp before me, and if you make a move to escape I'll shoot you dead as a herring!"

Sam was either a much-injured man, or the very best actor in the world. He pulled up and gazed at Jack in open-mouthed astonishment.

"YOU BLACKGUARD!" HE CRIED. "YOU SHALL PAY DEARLY FOR THIS."

"Jack, sonny," he observed slowly, "I thought as how you looked a bit excited. What can be the matter wid you, or is it play-actin' you are, and a-havin' a game wid poor old Sammy? Now,—which on 'em is it, I beg!" So saying, the teamster walked up to his horse, and, climbing into the saddle, returned to Jack.

So genuine seemed his air of mild wonder, which under the circumstances was almost dignified, that Jack was nonplussed. Sam's rifle lay across the pommel of his saddle, kept in place by one hand, and as the teamster held Jack with those snake's eyes of his, his horse fidgeted until the muzzle was in line with Jack's body.

"Sam, point that rifle the other way, or I'll blow your head off as sure as Fate!"

Sam did not move a muscle, but his horse fidgeted sideways until Jack was out of the line of fire.

"Well, Jack, sonny, you do surprise me!" exclaimed he. "I'm darned if I didn't think for a minute as how you meaned it!"

And to Jack's increased bewilderment he burst out into what seemed a hearty laugh. Still, Jack felt that the teamster had meditated that old treacherous Indian trick of shooting him: but Sam surely would not be such a fool as to attempt a patent murder so close to the camp! However, Jack knew that the information he possessed carried very serious consequences for him. Again, was it possible he was misjudging Sam, and had become the victim of his own fears?

"Sonny," continued the awry-eyed one, with a hint of solicitude in his smile, "I think you'd best git to camp. You're just a bit put out like, an' seein' Billy Brooker and that other gent——"

"Hawker, you mean," interrupted Jack boldly. "Do you think I didn't recognise him, and the police bills about him all over the country! What is more, I heard you call him by name!"

For just the quiver of an eyelid he thought a gleam of apprehension or anger flickered in the watery eyes, but it was gone as quickly.

"Chummie," said Sam, "if it's a game yer havin' wid me, jest say so. I've knowed Billy Brooker since the two on us went to old Dame's school down Sydney way. You've 'lowed that face o' Hawker's to grow on your 'magination,

sonny, an' now you're ready to see it in everything you sees. As fer hearin' me name him, that's one of the commonest delusions goin', when one's 'xcited and thinkin' on a name." Sam's face wore quite an air of philosophic speculation and injured innocence.

His manner as much as his words seemed so sincere that again the bogey of doubt assailed Jack, and the uncomfortable suspicion suggested itself that it was just possible he had lost his head and was making an ass of himself.

Then he felt that his right ear was wet and hot, and putting up his hand, withdrew it covered with blood. There was no imagination about that, anyhow.

"Jack," exclaimed Sam, before the lad could open his mouth, and with a look of interest on his face, "I think as how you've ripped your ear with that ere lawyer vine, the Wait-a-bit. It's the very deuce of a thing to claw one, an' your clo'es be all chawed up wid it, too."

His cool effrontery and plausible, if outrageous, explanation, fairly took Jack's breath away.

"I thought you were going to tell me that there was nothing the matter with my ear," the boy retorted fiercely. "Do you think I'm an utter idiot, Sam? Do you think I don't know the difference between a scratch and a rifle bullet?"

"Well, Jacky, sonny, I'll admit it looks bad," said Sam, with a show of patience and indifference truly artistic. "But jist you come over to this 'ere water-hole in the creek, an' wash it, an' if it ain't a scratch jist you tell pore old Sam Holt he's the blankest ole fool you've iver sot eyes on. Now, jist you do it, sonny."

Jack went down with Sam to the pool indicated and washed the ear. It fairly staggered him when what he had firmly believed was the effect of a rifle shot turned out to be a mere scratch, apparently done by some thorny bush.

"I told you as how you was a-fancyin' things," Sam remarked, "an' you'll be madder than I thought you was s'posin' you go back to camp and get sayin' as how Billie Brooker is Hawker, an' all that tarnation rot. You'll only get pore little Billie into trouble, and sure his lone mother —an' a widder at that—is dependin' on him down Sydney way. He swetted a horse, and I'll admit that same, and so have I in my time, and so might you, Jackie, sonny, s'posin' you was stony-broke and stuck. Now, if your father, the ole rip-snorter—an' meanin' no offence—knows he's there, he's bound to arrest him, seein' as how he's a kin' o' J. P. or beak. So take ole Sammy's advice and don't say a word as how you've seen a soul—jist think of Billie's pore mother, the lone widder!"

Afterwards, when Jack looked back upon the way Sam Holt not only made him disbelieve the evidence of his own senses, but raised serious doubts in his mind as to whether, after all, he was not the most fanciful fellow in the Australian Bush, he came to the conclusion that either Sam Holt was a much cleverer man than he had led them to suspect or that—and what was more than likely—he, Jack, was a bigger fool than ever his inner consciousness had suggested in his most pessimistic moments.

What with the knowledge that he was now quite safe, and with all his apprehensions and dangers explained away, the natural reaction set in, and Jack was not only angry with himself for having behaved like a fool, but hastened to assure Sam that it was not likely he was going to say a single word to any one about having met his friend Brooker in the Bush.

"Bravo, chummie!" commented Sam. "I'm glad you're a-comin' to your senses, an' I knows as how you're a real gent, as I've said before, an'll keep your word, so lemme put a bit of red gum to that ear of yourn and to-morrer there'll be no scratch there at all."

He went to a blood-wood tree and, taking a piece of red liquid gum from the stem with a piece of stick, applied it to Jack's ear. It dried the scratch and stopped the bleeding in a moment.

Sam had no sooner done this than some one hailed them. They turned, and there was the supercilious Bird, who had evidently strolled over from the camp to meet them. He was hatless, bare-footed and cool as a cucumber.

"Well, gents, where have you been?" he asked with a yawn. "You might have told a chap you were going for a ride. Loafing round here all day doing nothing has given me a fit of the blues."

This was the last straw. Jack simply gaped at them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MAN ON THE GREY HORSE.

IT was while Jack was still staring open-mouthed at Bird and Sam Holt, that Madge, Maitland and I cantered up. As we joined the group, I realised that Jack was full of something he ought to tell, but whether he would do so or not was another matter. Jack was terribly stiff-necked.

"Hello, Jack," I said, "what was that shooting going on some little time ago?"

Jack looked at me, but before he could speak, Sam Holt broke in:

"I s'pose that must have been me. Jack

here heerd it too. I was firin' at bandicoots. They're mighty tender eating, they be."

And, surely enough, there hung a couple of those dainty little creatures at Sam's saddle straps.

We all turned and walked our horses slowly in the direction of the camp. I noted that Madge was walking alongside Sam's horse, and that she was looking at the bandicoots tied to his saddle.

"Sam," she asked, "when did you learn to kill bandicoots by shooting them? You must show me how to do it. I have been wasting my time rooting them out with a stick—as most people have to do."

"Whoa there!" growled Sam, and I could have sworn by his action that he was provoking the startled caper of his horse, which he appeared to check.

With a side step and reaching over, Madge put a hand upon the bandicoots and turned them over.

But this was evidently too much for the usually imperturbable Sam. As if accidentally, he brushed her hand aside, and at the same time gathered up the reins. "I guess I'm off arter my mokes," he said. "I'll fetch in yours, too, Bird, while I'm at it."

"Old Paramatta's with the mob, I think," shouted Bird after him. "I h'ain't seen him since mornin', but he's sure to be all right."

I noted Jack's angry look but I did not find out till afterwards that he had recognised Paramatta tied up on the range with the horses belonging to the desperado Hawker.

As we came near the camp, Bird left us to go over to his own mob. Jack was strangely silent, as if turning over some conflicting problem in his mind. Under the tarpaulin we found Sir Donald reading. He welcomed us in his usual cheery and hearty way, making no remarks about our being late. The cook being over at the men's waggon, Bailey's wife and Madge soon made a billy of tea, and cutting the plum pudding into slices placed it in a frying-pan and served it up in a very appetising fashion indeed. But first we had some particularly tender cold meat, and this with some fresh Johnnie cakes and preserved potatoes hot and steaming, gave us a most enjoyable meal.

For the time being I tried to dismiss the disquieting suspicions that were haunting me. There was something wrong in camp—my instincts rarely played me false. That there was treachery at work, and that Jack had discovered it, but had been somehow coerced into silence, was taking hold of me. It was my positive duty to arrive at the truth. Still, it would be dangerous to act rashly. To communicate my fears to Sir Donald might only be disastrous. The summary court-martial and investigation which he was accustomed to would not do here. Simple Tommies under strict supervision and discipline were not like cunning old bushmen who were doubtless wanted by the police, and were moreover in a wild country where they could wage a guerilla warfare to our disadvantage. It was evident that Madge also suspected something. With her knowledge of that class of bushmen and her keen instincts, there was not much that escaped her.

After supper I had an opportunity of speaking to her alone. She had a tomahawk in her hand and was engaged in cutting sticks to rig her mosquito nets. She looked up at me inquiringly as I approached her.

"Madge," I said, "I should like to talk to you, and I don't want the others to overhear. Will you give me five minutes?"

We strolled into the bush as if searching for a stick.

"You're going to speak to me about Jack, and Sam Holt, and Bird?" she suggested when we were out of earshot.

"Yes," I said. "Something evidently happened to Jack to-day, and somehow he won't say anything about it. You know what you saw. Have you anything to suggest to me before I speak to Jack myself?"

"Only that the firing we heard was not Sam Holt shooting bandicoots. He must have thought we were very ignorant indeed about such things. Besides, I took the trouble to examine them—I daresay you saw me do it. They were killed by a stick. Why did he lie about it? And Bird, though we found him with bare feet in camp, had only just come back and turned out an over-heated horse. I took the trouble to find that out."

"Good," I said, "and the question now is, is it discreet of us to continue our journey with such men as Holt and Bird in the party? And we've got to find out what happened to Jack to-day. You see, at present we don't know enough to trouble Sir Donald about it."

"Give Jack till to-morrow," said Madge. "He may see things differently then. In the meantime, I should not say anything to any one, but we can keep a sharp look-out."

I could see the advisability of this, and we said nothing more on the subject. I felt certain that there was a traitorous element in the camp, but was utterly at a loss for a reason.

We had a peaceful camp that night, and next morning our party hitched up and started out as usual. There was only a very old and faint

dray track now to guide us. But Bailey had been this way before when he had gone on to the headwaters of the MacArthur River, and as he was a splendid bushman we knew he could steer us through that wild country with certainty. Madge and I allowed the others to ride on ahead, and then followed in front of the first waggon. But somehow, the teamsters were slower than usual, and it was not long before we had left them several hundred yards behind.

We were now in somewhat rolling and broken country, and to the north of us the hills were rough and precipitous.

Indeed, it would have been impossible to have kept more in that direction. Madge and I also noticed that there were many points *en route* from which a hostile party could easily have surprised us with dire effects. The Robinson river lay to the north, forcing its way through the defiles to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and we knew that in a day or two we must make the headwaters of the MacArthur River, where Madge's friends, the Millars, were supposed to be located.

It was a charming day, and Madge and I rode briskly along. There was a vitality in that clear tableland air which put one in the very best of spirits. Here are two verses from Adam Lindsay Gordon's poem, "The Sick Stockrider," typical of life in the Australian bush, and more or less known to every man and woman in that vast island-continent:

"'Twas merry in the glowing morn, among the gleaming grass
To wander, as we've wandered many a mile:
To blow the cool tobacco cloud, and watch the white wreaths pass,
Sitting loosely in the saddle all the while.

"'Twas merry in the backwoods when we spied the station roofs,
To wheel the wild scrub cattle at the yard,
With a running fire of stockwhips, and a fiery run of hoofs.
Oh, the hardest day was never then too hard!"

Talk of the power of local colour! If there is any one who knows aught of bush life of Australia whose pulses do not quicken when he hears these lines, I have yet to meet him. When Madge at my request repeated them, I realised how prosaic my life had been.

We rode on in silence for a few minutes after that; then Madge reined in her horse and said: "Did you notice this morning how Sam Holt kept behind the others in starting out? He generally takes the lead. It's an odd fancy, and I daresay you'll laugh at me, but what do you say to making a circle in the bush and coming up again in the rear on his tracks. We can't miss them?"

It seemed an odd proposition, and I could not exactly see what we were to learn or gain by it, but I acceded to her suggestion. A mile or two more or less mattered little.

We cut off to the right, and made our way back in a north-easterly direction so as to describe a half-circle, and come in again in the rear of the waggons. Both Madge and I carried our rifles slung in gun-buckets on the off-side, so as to be handy in case of necessity. We were well within the country of the wild blacks, and it was dangerous to be unprepared for these gentry.

Half an hour later, we threaded our way through a wide hollow between two high broken ridges. Madge suddenly reined in her horse, and, shading her eyes with her right hand, looked fixedly at a distant hill-top.

"Look over there," she said. "Don't you see him?"

I looked and saw on a distant ridge, but against the grey of an elfin dyke—an outcrop of rock—the figure of a man on horseback.

"It must be one of our own men," I observed, and unbuckled the Zeiss glasses I generally carried strapped to my saddle.

"We haven't a grey horse in our mob," observed the girl. "Let's get behind that bauhania tree and watch him."

CHAPTER XII.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

MADGE and I moved to where there would be the least chance of being seen, and, fixing my glasses, I soon had the horseman under observation. He was at least a couple of miles off, but I could see him fairly well. A rough-looking fellow he seemed, with a tattered cabbage-tree hat on his head, a full beard, shirt open in front, arms bare to the elbows, and rifle slung across the pommel of his saddle. His horse was a fine upstanding grey.

"He looks interesting," I observed, "but he's not in any way different from most other bushmen I've seen. He may be a prospector, or even a stockman from your friends the Millars.

"Would you mind letting me have a peep?" asked Madge, dismounting. "He looks as if he had been a long time out of civilisation," she observed at length. "Had he come from the Millars his shirt wouldn't be in rags. Even a prospector would own a spare one, and it is more than likely he would carry a prospector's outfit—a light pick and other things—with him. He's not a stockman or he

would have a stock-whip. And it's not one station hand in a hundred who could afford to ride such a splendid animal as that man has."

"Anything more?" I asked amusedly, but wondering at the girl's observant remarks.

"Yes! If he were a stockman he would probably have dogs with him, but I can see none, and he's got a bandolier as well as a belt filled with cartridges. I never saw or heard of any one wearing both save a police trooper or a new chum or——"

"Well?" I asked, as she paused.

"A bushranger," she added quietly.

"Better say it's the great Hawker at once, Madge," I said. "He seems a picturesque sort of villain, and I've no doubt would be an awkward customer to tackle."

"That's just who I was going to say he was," rejoined Madge.

"Hello, he's gone!" I exclaimed, for almost as she spoke the subject of our conversation had turned his horse and disappeared over the range.

Madge turned to me with a smile on her lips and a flash of excitement in her eyes.

"If I'm not mistaken," she remarked, "our friend on the grey horse is going in the same direction as ourselves. I don't think he has seen us, though, of course, he has noted our waggons. Let us be the early birds who get the worms. We've got a good start and we can make for the point where we left our lot this morning."

She put her horse to a canter, and I followed. I noticed that her eyes were always looking beyond the distant tree-tops and noting the configuration of the ridges and ranges. She was, while recognising some, impressing fresh features on her memory, in case she might require to use them again, for she looked back on several occasions, as if to see how the land lay, should we require to return hurriedly in that direction.

Within twenty minutes we struck the waggon tracks near the spot where we had left them, to go on ahead an hour or two earlier. We followed them at a good trot. Madge kept a very sharp look-out on either hand, even peering into thick clumps of bushes and observing the forks of trees. At last, at a little dry channel, we came to a tree from which a strip of bark hung down. It had been blazed by a tomahawk.

"Now," said the girl, "we're getting warm."

The next moment, happening to look in the fork of a gum tree a few paces distant, I saw a box about eighteen inches square. It was one of our ammunition boxes.

The girl said nothing, but looked into my eyes as I lifted it down. It was heavy, and pulling up the stout tin-lined lid I found that it contained the usual packages of rifle and revolver cartridges.

"This is from Sam Holt's waggon," said Madge, "and it was left here by arrangement."

"Quick, empty out the cartridges. We must clear off before the man on the grey horse comes."

I did as she directed, and we stuffed our wallets and pockets with the cartridges the box contained. I don't know how we could have stowed away any more. But there was also a large flask of coarse powder, and I didn't quite know what to do with that.

"Stuff the box with sand, or stones, or anything," Madge said, hurriedly, "and we'll prepare a surprise for Mr. Starlight."

I did as she directed. She stepped to a dead tree close at hand, and unloosed from it a ribbon of dry rotten touch-wood several inches long. She took out her handkerchief, and poured into it the contents of the powder-flask. Then she folded it up and placed it in the box. Into the powder she inserted the spigot of touchwood.

"Now light one end," she said, "and please make haste. If he should come it would spoil all."

I put a match to the fuse, and, laying it flat, closed the slide all but the sixteenth of an inch or so—just enough to give it sufficient air to burn. There would be no smoke from the dry fuse. Then I placed it in the fork of the tree again.

"Now right into the bush!" cried Madge. "There's a ridge running parallel with the way the waggons have gone, and we can get behind that and watch."

As I was fixing the fuse, Madge scribbled on a piece of paper the words, "*More to-morrer*—SAM." This she fixed to the tree below the box.

We followed the waggon tracks for some twenty yards to a gravelly piece of ground, then made straight for the ridge. We crossed to the other side, followed it for some little distance and halted at a spot where we could still see the tree where we had left the box.

"Madge," I suggested," what if it kills the fellow?"

"It might save valuable lives and some trouble if it did," she replied with a slight flush on her sun-browned cheeks, "but I'm afraid Mr. Hawker won't have any such luck. It will only warn him off the grass and make him think his worthy friend has been having a game with him. Don't you see what a good thing that will be? '*More to-morrer*.'"

"Yes, I can fancy it setting him and Sam by the ears," I observed musingly. "That is to say, if he survives the ordeal."

"When rogues fall out, honest folks are safe," commented Madge, modifying the old saying.

"If he only comes up and finds the box in time,' I suggested with some anxiety.

"Here he is!" cried Madge. "The villain on the grey horse."

I pulled my rifle out of the gun-bucket, jumped off my horse, ran to a tree, and, using a fork of it as a rest, covered the desperado.

"I've got him covered, Madge," I cried.

But the girl had not waited for my example. She had done the same thing. The next two or three minutes was like an eternity. Would that fuse do its work? Jack would surely be safe at that distance.

THEN I PLACED IT IN THE FORK OF THE TREE AGAIN.

"He sees the blaze on the tree," I exclaimed. "He's got the box."

"Now look out for squalls!" exclaimed Madge.

She had hardly finished her sentence when she put out her hand and caught me by the arm.

"Look!" she cried, "don't you see him? Oh, stop him or do something!"

It was Jack who had cantered up unseen by us while our attention had been centred on Hawker. He had pulled up his horse, and sat facing the desperado, who was not ten paces away.

Then I was startled by a cry from Madge.

"He's going to give Jack the box," she cried. "I must fire"

CHAPTER XIII.

CHECK TO HIS KING.

AS we learned afterwards, Jack had been riding ahead of the waggons when he missed a knife he usually carried. Remembering that he had left it in the previous night's camp, he rode back to get it. On his way, and just as he had passed some

undergrowth, he came unexpectedly upon Hawker.

The latter caught sight of him at the same moment. "Hello!" exclaimed the desperado, "you seem to be mighty bent on looking me up, mister."

"I suppose the bush is free to us both," retorted Jack, affecting an easiness he was very far from feeling. "But Sam Holt told me about you, and I can quite understand why you don't want to meet more strangers than you can help."

"What ho!" exclaimed the satyr-faced one with a grin, "I hope old Sammy didn't peach on me. Did he tell you who you had the honour of being interduced to?"

"He told me your name was Brooker," replied Jack, "and that you were in some sort of trouble about a horse."

"Oh, he told you that, did he! Did you think it smart of one mate to give another away like that?"

"I don't see that it mattered much, and I don't think that even Sir Donald would interfere in a thing of the kind. We're not policemen. If I caught you in the act of stealing my horse it would be quite another matter."

"Mighty good of you, I'm sure!"

"I see we've dropped a box of ammunition off one of the waggons," said Jack. "It must have been carelessly put on. I think I'd better relieve you of it."

"All right, sonny, you can take it," and Hawker prepared to pass the reins from his right hand into the one that held the box.

The action was not lost upon Jack.

"No, you don't!" he cried, and his rifle was whipped from the gun-bucket.

Like a lightning flash Hawker's hand went back to his hip. At the same moment two rifle shots rang out from the neighbouring ridge, and a couple of bullets sang perilously close. Before Jack could level his rifle, Hawker's pistol was in line with his face.

There was a flash and a roar. The ammunition box in front of Hawker seemed to be convulsed—the lid was forced out, and a great column of flame and smoke shot into the air. The desperado was hurled backwards over his horse, and the scared animal galloped off into the bush.

Jack was untouched. His antagonist had fallen heavily to earth, his feet, luckily for him, clearing the stirrups. He lay like a bundle of limp rags, all anyhow, upon the ground. Jack dismounted, and was bending over him when he heard the dull tattoo of horses' hoofs, and in a minute or two Madge and I galloped up.

"This is the man you met yesterday?" she said, pointing to the apparently lifeless body on the ground.

"Yes," said Jack, flushing slightly.

"And you kept it to yourself!"

"As I was the party directly concerned, I didn't see it was any one else's business—and don't now!" He looked her defiantly in the eyes and his lips were drawn tight.

I had jumped off my horse and was turning over the limp and senseless desperado. He was slightly scorched about the face and neck, and I was searching for broken bones.

"Jack," said Madge after a pause, and I thought just a trifle more gently, "don't you think it would have been safer for all concerned to have told us that this man was in the neighbourhood?"

"I wasn't sure who he was," replied Jack, "and to tell you the truth I'm not quite sure that I'm not dreaming now! How on earth did that box happen to burst up just as he was going to shoot?"

In a few words Madge told him, and Jack whistled.

"I can't see there's much the matter with this man," I said. "He's only stunned. We'll have to make a prisoner of him, but he'll be a dreadful nuisance. I don't know at all what we can do with him. Jack, will you catch his horse?—you'll see it over there amongst the trees; it hasn't gone far—and I'll remain on duty. Then you and Madge had better ride on to the waggons. Tell only Sir Donald of what has occurred and send Bailey back with the spring cart."

Jack hastened to obey. Madge would fain have stayed with me, but I was obdurate. As the two turned away there came the sound of hoofs along the track, and, to my relief, Parker rode up.

"The general would like to see you, sir," he said

In as few words as possible I explained the situation to the ex-trooper. I told him he had better remain with the prostrate desperado, while we rode on ahead and sent the spring cart back.

"Very good, sir," said Parker.

"And remember, Parker, we'll have to be careful with regard to some of the others when we get back to camp. I'm afraid there's a good deal of trouble ahead of us."

"If it's trouble they're looking for, sir, I'll take 'em on with pleasure," he said, visibly brightening at the prospect. "I 'aven't 'ad a good scrap for some little time now."

Left to himself, Parker took up a good position

with his back to a tree, where he could keep the now uneasily-moving miscreant well under observation, and enjoy a smoke and a good think at the same time.

On finishing his smoke he was rejoiced to find that his prisoner had regained consciousness. The desperado took one long look at Parker, and then the eyelids closed upon the wicked and inscrutable grey eyes once more.

"I fancies you'll eventually find Sam Holt in a place we needn't mention now," remarked Parker. "But Sam always has been partial to playin' with fireworks. Don't distress yourself, sonny; we'll 'ave the shay here presently an' won't shake you up more'n we can help."

Parker wondered how long it would be before the light cart came for them. He felt somewhat sleepy, and took out his pipe again. The

THE DESPERADO WAS HURLED BACKWARDS OVER HIS HORSE.

"That's right," said Parker "'ave a snooze. I ain't the sort of chap as cares to kick a cove when 'e's down, but if you take my tip, mate, when you get in front of a jury don't look at them like that, or your name's Hooky Walker, sure!"

Hawker seemed to wake up again, and in a strangely quiet voice asked Parker for a drink.

Parker gave him one from the canvas water bag he had with him, then asked him how he felt.

"Mighty bad, mate," said the outlaw, "but if I could find the man as packed that box of cartridges so mighty careless, I'd die happy."

grasshoppers suddenly ceased their erratic din. A little lizard scuttled off a flat stone and ran up a tree. Parker lapsed into soliloquy.

"We seem to be getting ahead of things a bit," he said. "I'd like the General to find that chap Smith, and next to that I'd like to meet that feller Crocodile again. My! I'd square up accounts with him for that thorn-bush he chucked me into."

A shadow fell at his feet. He sprang up in alarm with one hand over his head as if to shield it.

Crash! something came down on his head, felling him to the earth.

He *had* met Crocodile again.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANOTHER MOVE.

MADGE, Jack, and I rode in a circle so as not to arouse the suspicions of Holt and Bird, and struck the waggon which the former was driving. More to allay any suspicions he might have, than anything else, I remarked:

"Well, Holt, you've been making good time. Close on midday camp now, isn't it?"

"Yes, doctor; time for grub-pill, I fancies," he replied.

I rode on and found Sir Donald. In as few words as possible I told him what had happened.

"Will the fellow, this man Hawker, live, do you think?" he asked.

"I am sure of it." I replied. "You see, the explosion forced open the lid of the box and saved a more serious one. I examined the man thoroughly. There were no splinters, and he has no bones broken. He is merely suffering from shock and the fall from his horse."

Like the wise old soldier he was, Sir Donald deemed it best to remove the traitors in camp as far as possible from the scene of the accident, and to keep them, for the meantime at least, in the dark as to what had taken place. His plans were quickly made.

He waited for Bailey, who was riding alongside the spring cart, and told him what had occurred. He ordered him to get his wife's riding horse from the mob, saddle it, and with her ride on for a few miles to where there was good camping-ground. The teams would not stop as usual for the mid-day meal, but make one long stage instead of their accustomed two.

Bailey went off to execute these orders, and Jack took his place as driver of the spring cart. Coming to an iron-stone ridge, Sir Donald, Jack, and myself struck off into the bush to make back to where we had left Parker and Hawker.

The travelling was good, and in a little over an hour and a half we drew near the place where the lively proceedings of the morning had occurred.

"Here we are," I remarked to Sir Donald. "There's the box that did the damage. I can't see their horses, though. Hello! here's Parker! What on earth has happened?"

It was Parker, but such a Parker! Staggering like a drunken man, hatless and with streaks of clotted blood rendering his white face ghastly in the extreme, he tottered towards us. Hawker was not there.

"Well, Parker," said Sir Donald, "what has happened to you? Where is your prisoner?"

"Gone, sir," said Parker with a world of misery in his eyes, "and I can't make out how, unless it was the other chap took him. He was just a-comin' to when I got knocked out from behind."

"Ah! a friend of your prisoner's crept up from behind and tapped you on the head!" said Sir Donald. "It's a wonder they didn't kill you when they were at it. But I'm surprised at a man like you being had like that." Sir Donald turned to me. "Just have a look at his head, Payne, like a good fellow."

"It warn't a white man, sir, as did it," Parker exclaimed. "It was a naked black chap as sneaked up behind and did it with a stick. I twigged his shadow."

"Ah, your old friend, Crocodile, of course," I said, "but why he didn't pay off his old score properly quite beats me. He must have thought he had done the business with that one blow, and he didn't give you credit for possessing a skull as generously formed by nature to resist attack as his own."

"Never mind, Parker," observed Sir Donald with a smile, "it will be your turn next time."

The worst feature of the situation in Parker's eyes was that Crocodile had ridden off with his horse. He gave Crocodile no credit for not having killed him outright—he knew how that was. He also knew there was nothing heroic in the black-fellow assisting Hawker to decamp.

Having told his story, he submitted a scheme to us that at once commended itself to our intelligence. It was that he should ride back to camp, get a pick and shovel from one of the waggons, and communicate our plans to Bailey. The latter would then keep Holt, Bird, and the others employed in camp till we returned. Later on it would be easy to hint that a strange man had been found killed by a mysterious explosion, and naturally Holt and Bird would imagine that Hawker had somehow or other met a well-deserved fate.

The brief twilight was coming on apace before Parker returned from the camp with a light prospecting pick and shovel strapped to the saddle of a led horse.

"It's all right, sir," he said to Sir Donald, "they saw me take the pick and shovel, and Bailey will tell them the sad news. He'll keep them too busy to follow me."

It did not take us long to make an imitation grave. Then we rode back to camp slowly, and the stars were shining brightly when we got there. Bailey told us how Sam Holt had sat with staring eyes when, in reply to his question he—Bailey—had told him that we were gone to bury the mutilated remains of an unknown man whom we had found in the bush. Sam

CRASH! SOMETHING CAME DOWN ON HIS HEAD, FELLING HIM TO THE GROUND.

Holt and Bird had crawled to their mosquito nets immediately after supper, unwontedly quiet and subdued.

CHAPTER XV.

HAWKER PAYS US A VISIT.

THAT night, while we lay sleeping, two evil-looking figures were threading their way on foot along the top of an iron-stone ridge. One had an old hat pressed tightly down over his long hair, his ragged shirt turned up to the elbows, and a carbine slung over his back; the other, a thickly-set savage with a shaggy mop of hair and bare to the waist, carried a club in one hand and a spear in the other. The white man was Hawker; the black one, Crocodile.

They descended the ridge and stopped to reconnoitre. Out in the open, some fifty yards from the bank of a lagoon, they saw the ghostly sheen of canvas, and the black bulk of waggons, in the clear moonlight. Beyond these again, feeding out on an open flat, were the horses, with a mounted figure on the far side, which they knew to be a teamster keeping watch over the mob.

Hawker looked long and carefully. Then, noiseless as a shadow, he crawled down the bank of the lagoon and skirted it till he was abreast of the camp. He paused a moment as he reached it, and looked about. Was it only fancy, or had he really seen a dark figure moving near that waggon over which a huge tarpaulin was rigged? Fancy, of course.

He crept up to what he believed to be Holt's mosquito net, seized the arm of the recumbent figure within and gently shook it. "Sam, Sam," he said in a louder voice than prudence dictated. Then a horror seized upon him, for he saw that the staring eyes, the half raised head, and the smooth white face made ghastlier by the moonlight, were not those of the

man he thought he was addressing. *It was the man whom Crocodile had knocked on the head and whose freshly filled-in grave he had actually seen!* With a wild cry, Hawker turned and fled headlong.

But in taking the most direct way back to cover he had to pass that waggon near to which he thought he had detected the shadowy form of some one. He was just passing it when the slim figure of a woman stepped out into the moonlight and called on him to stand. He noted that she had a rifle in her hands. He tried to disengage the one he carried slung across his back, but found there was no time for that. She saw the action and in another moment had the gun to her shoulder. Bang! and a thousand pealing echoes awoke the slumbering camp. Hawker felt a burning touch on his well-thatched scalp, and his hat went spinning from his head. At the same moment a spear whizzed through the air, but instead of reaching the woman at whom it was aimed it caught the desperado on the fleshy part of the shoulder. With a roar, Hawker sprang into the air and continued his mad career. Some one sprang up from behind a mosquito net and made a grab at him. But the desperado hurled his assailant to the ground and kept on. (Afterwards we learned this was Maitland.) In another minute, and before Madge, whose bullet it was that had cost Hawker his hat, could get another fair shot at him, he had dived into the shadow of the wattle. Two, three shots more into the clump where he had disappeared, and the enemy was as good as lost.

"Take care, men, and don't shoot until you know what you're firing at," cried Sir Donald, one of the first to be aroused by the tumult. "Now, send a volley into that wattle," he added. "It will hasten them out of our immediate neighbourhood, anyhow."

We searched the thicket with shot after shot, and it is pretty safe to say that no one tarried there from a matter of choice.

Sir Donald then sent Parker, Bailey, and myself off to the right to cut the ridge at an angle, and, if possible, intercept the intruder or intruders, as the case might be. We were not to go beyond a certain distance. We were to remain as much as possible in the shadow, keep not more than twenty paces apart, and take no risks. "First fire and then inquire," were our orders.

Gripping our rifles, we went off so as to cut the long ridge about a mile off. We had a shrewd suspicion, however, that, even with our advantage, the camp's assailant would take very good care that we did not sight him again. As we jogged along together, we heard a shot fired from somewhere on our left, and then another. There was an answering report from the camp and then silence again.

"Crikey!" observed Parker, "that's that chap Hawker come to himself and taking a shot at the camp. Geewhitaker!" added the cavalryman, "but I never saw a face like that fellow's in all my life. He looked as if he'd seen a ghost, and to tell the truth I'm darned if I didn't think *I* was dreamin' when I spotted his ugly mug lookin' into mine."

It gave the honest fellow immense satisfaction to recall that blood-curdling shriek of Hawker's. It was well worth the rap he had got on the head twelve hours before, he said.

We struck the ridge and travelled back along it. There were no signs of any enemy, and we knew it was exceedingly unlikely that any would show up again.

When we regained the camp, I at once proceeded to Sir Donald, and in the shadow of one of the waggons we held a brief council. Fortunately, no one, save, of course, Madge and Parker, had recognised Hawker. The others merely thought the camp had been attacked by blacks.

On the morrow we were due to strike the headwaters of the MacArthur River, where we hoped to find Madge's friends, the Millars. We would then determine what was to be done with regard to pursuing Hawker. By the time these conclusions were arrived at, dawn was near, and Sir Donald gave orders for the fires to be lighted and the billies boiled, so that an early start could be made.

Oh! those beautiful bush dawns, when the noisy nocturnal world has sunk to rest and everything is still, while as yet the harbingers of the fervid tropical day have not asserted themselves, and that other world which loves the light still mimics death. There is a wan, watery gleam trembling in the eastern sky. The moonlight fades, and the stars pale; a ghostly grey creeps into the forest aisles, and a faint lemon glow silhouettes the tree-tops to the east. Then all suddenly a laughing jackass springs his noisy rattle on a drowsy feathered world. A little bird among the boughs calls sleepily to its mate. There comes the answer, then another awakes, and still another, until there is a glorious burst of song. Then the sun peeps over the tree-tops like a great molten ball of fire, and the dew sparkles on every leaf and blade as if a shower of fine diamonds had fallen in the night. A flock of gaudy parrots fly screeching overhead to water; a great kangaroo comes bounding along and disappears again in the dim of the trees like

A THOUSAND PEALING ECHOES AWOKE THE SLUMBERING CAMP.

some grey ghost. There is a growing buzz and hum from a million living things. The tropical day has begun

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CHAPTER XVI.

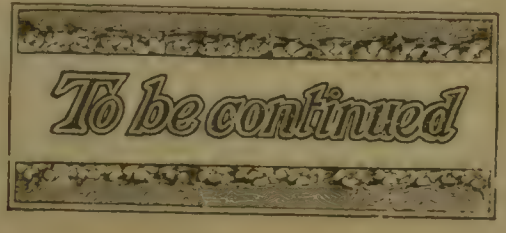
IN NO MAN'S LAND.

THANKS to the early start and to the horses being fresh, we stood, late in the afternoon, on a ridge that looked down upon the valley of the MacArthur River. Away to the north, we could see the mountains where it rose and broadened out into a stream, before reaching the great wooded plains. It would be difficult to take transport through that broken country, should we require to return that way.

We pushed on, and where a goodly sized stream from the east joined the larger body of water, we found the Millars' camp. Nothing could have been more fortunate than thus striking it, but as if in mockery of our somewhat premature congratulations, we found it was deserted!

But what immediately attracted our attention was a laconic notice. On a great white gum-tree, in huge letters, was cut the single puzzling word:

"DIG."



THE EXPLOITS OF TANTIA BHEEL.

By T. S. GURR.

No. 4.—ASHCROFT SAHIB.

Illustrated by GEO. SOPER.

THE monsoon was over. In the valleys and on the plains, where broad sheets of water had stretched, now waved green, luxuriant rice crops in full ear. The careful ryot drained his fields and prepared to reap his harvest, exulting in the season's bounty. The prolonged drought which had wrought such devastation in the past few years had passed, and an era of good times had dawned again.

And while the peaceable villagers met together to rejoice in their sixteen-anna crop and make sacrifices to their household gods, the younger and more adventurous spirits, abandoning their peaceful avocations, disappeared one by one, to swell the number of dacoities that were to be perpetrated during the incoming year. Some, tempted by the wealth and the stirring stories of the hardened outlaws who had sought a temporary asylum in their hamlets during the rains, were to be mere novitiates at the dangerous business. They had watched with curious eyes the hero-worship which had been accorded these villains. They had noted how freely they distributed their ill-gotten largesse—how eagerly the women bestowed their admiration upon them, and they had burned to share the glories and the triumphs of the freebooting clan attached to Tantia Bheel.

In an old temple, perched high upon a beetling cliff that overlooked much of the country over which the forays would extend, the preliminary council had been held. Here, amidst a pantheon of graven gods, that frowned and gibbered at them from every corner, oaths were taken, and the plan of campaign discussed. It was a strange scene, this assemblage of desperate men and their leaders, squatted in the flickering gloom, murmuring applause or dissent as one speaker after the other unfolded his plans or spoke of the best methods of avoiding or crushing their most dangerous enemy, Fielding, of the police force. The stars were beginning to die out when they dispersed, after making a solemn sacrifice to Bhowani of a fat goat, bred and reared by Vinayak Deo. It needed but a week now, and Fielding's work would begin.

In a very unsettled state of mind Vinayak Deo wandered back that morning to his pretentious and "pukka"-built house on the outskirts of the village. He was a Brahmin, and a man of great influence in his district, almost seventy years of age; in appearance lean and withered-looking. To the simple-minded villagers he was not only a man of great learning and affluence, but a holy man, and a soothsayer as well, who had considerable sway over their destinies. When his rents were collected and his house put in order, Vinayak Deo, clad in the ascetic garb of a Ghoosai, wandered away to some distant shrine of Rama, the Prince of Ayodhya, on a pilgrimage. But when the rains commenced, and the Bheel dacoits flocked back to their villages, Vinayak's pilgrimages ceased also.

Between him and Tantia Bheel very little friendship had ever existed. Although he recognised his valour and daring, Tantia always remained a low-caste dog, far below his exalted plane. After all, what was Tantia? His tool merely; for if the Bheel could capture and loot, was not his the genius which organised and directed? Was he not known for hundreds of miles as a holy man and a traveller, whose advice was sought by all before embarking on any enterprise? And if at times some rich caravan or wealthy pilgrim in avoiding certain roads which he had indicated, fell straightway into the tracks of Tantia Bheel, was the spoil due to his cunning or Tantia's feat of arms? And if he, as a respected friend of the Government, and a trusted spy of the police, led that bewildered body a wild-goose chase in an opposite direction to the spot where Tantia would next operate, who deserved the credit For several years had he led this protean

existence, always the recipient of the biggest share of the year's loot. But now things had changed. The council he had just left had relegated him to a second place, and the intrepid Tantia stood foremost in the gang, demanding a greater division of spoil for himself, and a proportionate abatement for the "holy man."

It was his last council! He had wavered in his decision just before his last pilgrimage ended, but he was firmly resolved now. He mentioned his resolution to his wife as soon as he reached home. Choking with indignation, he related how the dacoits had debased him. Then an idea suggested itself, and the hard lines of his mouth relaxed, and his blazing eyes gleamed with a low cunning. "We are both old now," he said. "We have enough to keep us in luxury. Let us leave this village. I know of a city where the Raj is strong, and the police numerous. There we can live in safety and enjoy our gains. Tantia will seek me if I desert him, and murder me if he dare, but I shall place him where he can do no harm. Tantia the murderer, the dacoit,—who knows that I, a Brahmin and a holy man, associate with such scum? He has slipped out of the hands of the police many times, but I shall deliver him into the clutches of a man whose strength and valour are greater than his. Have I spoken to thee of Ashcroft Sahib? He it is who is Fielding Sahib's assistant, a veritable giant in stature and a tiger in wrath and daring. I dread no man living, but fear seized me when I came before his presence. Thou shouldst see his sword; it dangles to the ground, and is buckled close under his arms, it is twice the length of a tulwar, and studded near the hilt with a ruby of magnificent colour and clearness. They say he can cleave a man in twain with a single blow. Tantia shall feel the weight of that sword. Forty koss from here a wealthy widow will proceed on a journey to Nassik laden with treasure for the shrine. I have advised the route, and Tantia knows where that pilgrimage must stop. I shall breathe a word into Ashcroft Sahib's ear, and Tantia shall take a pilgrimage to the gallows in the gaol-yard instead. Ha! ha! Tantia would scorn Vinayak Deo! I shall be there to see him hanged. Meanwhile, pack our goods and chattels and prepare for a long journey. I can appoint a bailiff over my property here, and sell it at some seasonable time, when every dacoit is hanged or driven far beyond those distant mountains!"

Slowly the line of carts jolted onward. The foremost, with a hood and curtains of costly silk, tyres of solid silver, and drawn by two gaily caparisoned bullocks, contained the wealthy widow Sumitra, bound for the great fair or "jathra" at Nassik. The sun was hot, though past the meridian, and the dust thick, but the bullock-drivers sang cheerfully, urging their clumsy beasts forward with an occasional kick in the ribs and a brandish of their seldom-used whips. They had left the last mountain some miles behind, and the rough track which converged on the Grand Trunk Road lay white and gleaming, like a writhing serpent, along the great plain. By nightfall the Bhilsa jungle would be reached, and there the camp would be made, and the evening meal cooked. The blessings of the gods had so far attended them on their pious journey. There might be dacoits lurking some distance away, but who cared? Sumitra was an aged woman, and she spoke not of this danger; and, besides, had not Vinayak Deo spoken? Half-nodding in the afternoon's warmth, drowsy with the droning hum of insects, the occupants of the carts abandoned themselves to religious meditations, or anticipated the multiform pleasures which the great "jathra" would afford. The bells on the bullocks tinkled: some one yawned with characteristic heartiness: now and again the snatch of a song would be heard: otherwise, the caravan proceeded in that quiet and leisurely manner proverbial in the East.

Suddenly the leading cart stopped, and those following pulled up immediately. There was a hubbub of voices, that of Sumitra in her shrillest tones being most audible and distinct. A roar of laughter went up from a score of hoarse throats, and a mob of armed dacoits broke cover and rushed towards the cart-line. With submissive resignation the bullock-drivers sprang from their seats, and squatting on the road loudly appealed for mercy. Half-veiled faces were thrust through the curtains, and female supplications were added to the din. Sumitra alone, perched on a bundle of her choice belongings, roundly rated the dacoits as "thieves" and "scoundrels." Tantia, his face convulsed with merriment, received her compliments as a matter of course.

"Thou art a woman, and therefore thy tongue must wag. Being a widow who hast escaped the funeral pile, thy tongue perforce must be steeped with venom. What hast thou besides this abuse?"

"Nought for thee, thou infamous cut-throat, thou son of a jackal! Who art thou to speak of a funeral pile to me? Begone, ere it be too

TO HIS SURPRISE, A HUGE FIGURE, CLAD IN WHITE, ARMED AND HELMETED, SPRANG UP FROM THE FLOOR OF THE CART, AND GRIPPED HIM WITH ARMS OF STEEL.

late. Dost not thou know my mission? Has the wrath of the gods no terrors for thee?"

"I know nought," said Tantia, with callous impudence, "but the yearning to possess the beauty and the charms that I see unfolded before me. Scorned as thou art by all thy caste men, rejoice now that the days of thy widowhood are numbered. Thy goods will be divided amongst such as desire them, but I shall claim thee, thou most priceless treasure of all. My eyes will not see the bald patches on thy head—thy wrinkles will pass unnoticed; thy form will put on the plumpness of undying youth, and together we will journey to every holy shrine and thus expiate our sins. So cackle not like a hen on a coop, but clamber down and embrace thy good fortune."

For reply, Sumitra hurled a copper cooking-pot with unerring aim at the outlaw. It struck him full in the chest, and Tantia, cursing her ancestors back to at least a dozen generations, ordered his men to pull her out, and ransack the cart. Making a rush at the next, he clambered in, tulwar in hand, ready to cut down the first to offer resistance. To his surprise, a huge figure, clad in white, armed and helmeted, sprang up from the floor of the cart, and gripped him with arms of steel. A volley of musketry simultaneously crashed from several carts behind, and the blue-coated sepoys of the Raj leaped out to battle with the dacoit band. Tantia was in the hands of Ashcroft, and for once in his chequered career he had met his match. In the struggle, both men fell heavily out of the cart to the ground, but Ashcroft did not relax his hold. Tantia wriggled and writhed, vainly attempting to use his sword-arm, but Ashcroft hugged him with the strength of a gigantic bear. Still wrestling with desperate vigour, Tantia regained his feet, and endeavoured to throw his antagonist. But Ashcroft had gripped his revolver, and forcing the outlaw forward, he struck him with terrible force on the forehead. Half-stunned, Tantia sank on his knees, his arms uplifted to shield his face. Once more the revolver butt descended, breaking the limb that stopped it. A couple more blows, and Tantia lay still, prone in the dusty road.

The surprise had been complete. Vinayak Deo had been avenged! A host of fleeing dacoits scurried across the plain, the sepoys in pursuit. A dozen of them lay bound, prisoners, whilst several distorted forms testified to the deadliness of the sepoys' marksmanship. Tantia, still breathing, was handcuffed and leg-ironed, and hurled into a cart for conveyance to the nearest police post. Ashcroft, with the face of a delighted schoolboy, bandied jests with the exultant Sumitra, and spoke of a pilgrimage which would end at the gallows.

Once more the caravan resumed its march, but now the bullocks were urged forward with a haste that they naturally resented. The drivers shouted one to the other, and the sepoys, weary of being cramped up in carts, strolled along swaggering and laughing over their late exploits. Ashcroft determined to press on, and if possible to clear the Bhilsa jungle before midnight. He had arranged to meet Fielding on the other side at that hour, as his chief anticipated an attempt to rescue Tantia if Ashcroft were successful in capturing him. One of his best men had been deputed to carry the news, and request Fielding to move forward as quickly as possible to join forces. It was Ashcroft's first brush with Tantia, and the stalwart young police officer felt no inconsiderable pride at his success. He was determined that on this occasion Tantia should see justice. There was the possibility of a dacoit attack or ambush, but he was determined to blow out his prisoner's brains rather than let him escape. He had placed Tantia in a cart with three other badly wounded dacoits, and had instructed two men to follow in the immediate rear of the cart with loaded rifles, whilst two others walked ahead. Bound and fettered, lying apparently insensible, and covered with blood, there seemed but little likelihood of the noted dacoit chief's ever returning to his deeds of outlawry.

"Will the Sahib not stop and encamp for the night? See, it is quite dark, and the road terribly rough and stony. It will be quite two hours before the moon rises, and by then the bullocks will be too exhausted to move. We too are tired, and need rest and food."

Sumitra spoke nervously. Around them was the gloom of an almost impenetrable jungle. There were stealthy rustlings in the underbrush, hasty movements in the trees, and shrieks and calls from numberless denizens of the forest. There could also be heard the shrill raucous cry of pea-fowl, and the leaping of troops of monkeys in the trees—the swish and sough of the branches as they progressed from top to top. With a series of grunts a herd of wild pig dashed past the road, and away in the distance a pack of jackals set up a weird howl. Birds and beasts seemed alike perturbed, and added terror to the intense darkness. Then, presently, as if from the very heart of the forest, they heard the deep-mouthed "ough" of the king of the Indian jungle.

"It is better to move forward," Ashcroft replied, placing a hand on the hilt of his enormous sword. "Have no fear. The bullocks will be none the worse for a little extra work. In a few hours we shall be beyond all harm. A hundred men with Fielding Sahib await us as soon as we leave these shadows behind."

"Is Tantia safe?" she inquired. "I fear that man as I do no other man living. Hadst thou not been with us, he would have cut my throat and that of every one of my party. He is possessed of a devil. They say no man has power to hold him, and that he can escape, however strong his bonds, or however thick his prison walls. See that he escapes not. By thy magic sword see that he does not escape."

"He will not escape," laughingly responded Ashcroft. "He has not opened his eyes or moved a limb since I struck him down; besides, we have placed irons upon him, and were he strong as a lion they would hold him fast. All I fear is that he will die before he can be tried. Several times have my men reported that he is already dead, for he gives no sign of life. Dead or alive, it is all the same. I have rid Hindoostan of this pest!"

ASHCROFT, STOOPING OVER THE PROSTRATE FORM OF TANTIA, WATCHED HIS FACE STEADILY FOR A MOMENT.

"Come nearer the cart," said Sumitra. "I feel safer when thou art close by me. Was that a tiger that roared just now?"

"What of that?" said Ashcroft, edging closer to the cart. "The poor beast requires food, and is seeking it. He is not likely to whet his appetite here."

"Thou art a warrior, truly," responded Sumitra admiringly. "I care not for dacoits or wild beasts when I hear thy voice. What! Art thou going to leave me?"

"For a moment," answered Ashcroft. "I am going to inspect the cart which bears Tantia, and re-arrange the guard. I shall soon return."

He fell to the rear. "Luximon," he shouted, as the cart with the prisoners came up, "is all well?"

"Yes, Huzoor," said the fine Mahratta naik. He walked to his chief's side and whispered, "Tantia is dead beyond all doubt. He has ceased to breathe this long time."

"Bring a torch," ordered Ashcroft, as he clambered into the cart. A flaming brand was thrust into the cart, and Ashcroft, stooping over the prostrate form of Tantia, watched his face steadily for a moment. The eyelids of the dacoit chief were turned back, and the whites exposed. There was no sign of respiration. The face was covered with dust and blood, and the limbs relaxed. "If he is dead," said Ashcroft, "he has only just died. He may, however, be foxing. Keep a careful watch, and redouble the guard."

"It will be done," said the naik, as he ordered up more men. Ashcroft walked forward again, and took up his post near Sumitra, and with much jolting and stumbling the procession marched slowly onward. The additional guard, falling in behind Tantia's cart, began to ridicule the idea of so much precaution being used. "Why does not the Sahib throw his body to the jackals, instead of burdening the poor bullocks?" They lit their cigarettes and chatted together, loitering from their position at the cart-tail. The guard in front, not seeing the necessity of keeping a close watch over a corpse, fell to the rear, to enjoy a smoke and the general ribaldry. The bullock-cart

driver, tired by his long day's work, nodded and dozed.

Within the cart, the lifeless body of Tantia very cautiously moved. Hearing sounds which indicated a loose watch, he nudged the wounded dacoit next to him, and whispered to him to move further along. Then, very quickly, he scratched away the straw at the bottom of the cart until he could feel the boards. Just as he had divined! The boards were thin, and badly fitted together. He hooked the fingers of his sound arm into a wide space and pulled with all his strength. The nails on the frame began to give, and presently the narrow board was uprooted. Using this one as a lever, he very carefully forced up the next. The slight noise he made was drowned by the guards' chatter, so he repeated the operation. Replacing the boards carefully, he covered them up with straw, and restored himself to his first position. For another half-hour the journey continued without fresh incident. He listened attentively. From out of the multitude of sounds which came from the jungle, his trained ear detected a call which made his heart bound. His faithful followers were at hand, and his opportunity would soon come.

Patiently waiting, the minutes went by. Then, of a sudden, a fierce uproar arose at the rear of the caravan. Shots were fired and fierce yells made the forest ring. He heard men scamper past and his guard rush up to the cart. His cart stopped, and Ashcroft, with levelled revolver, glared inside. Tantia did not move a muscle. "Hack them to pieces," he heard Ashcroft command, "if they make the least movement!" The disorder increased. A mass of flying sepoys dashed up the road. "Back, you cowards!" Ashcroft yelled. "Back, or I'll cut you down!" His sword was out, and in the torch-glare they saw the red ripple on his blade. They turned, and, following their leader, dashed once more at their desperate foes. Down the bullock track Ashcroft rushed like a fiend unchained. The dacoits saw his huge figure approach, and the bravest of them formed up to meet his onslaught. One after another fell maimed and bloody before his awful blows. They tried to close on him, but his sword-point reached them ere they could strike. Mad with fright, the bullocks plunged wildly about, some falling in their traces, others rushing off the track and disappearing in the dense gloom. The dacoits stabbed and slashed at man and beast alike. Breaking away wherever Ashcroft charged, they dodged out of his reach, and fastened themselves upon his feebler sepoys. Tantia's cart had bolted with the rest, and finally crashed into the bole of a huge peepul. The guard, yelling with all their might, tenaciously followed, zealously seeing

HE SLIPPED THROUGH, UNNOTICED, TO THE GROUND, AND LAY PERFECTLY MOTIONLESS.

that none of the prisoners leaped off the cart. They raised the fallen bullocks, and with kicks and curses headed them round on to the road again. Tantia's opportunity had arrived. Wriggling through the opening he had made at the bottom of the cart, he slipped through, unnoticed, to the ground, and lay perfectly motionless. The guard, busy with the cattle, and unable to discriminate any object in the darkness, passed on; and Tantia, staggering to his feet, hobbled away as fast as he could.

Upon the road the conflict still raged. The dacoits, greatly outnumbering Ashcroft's force, pertinaciously continued the combat. Ashcroft, hoarse with shouting, and almost breathless with his exertions, chased the marauders in and out of the *mêlée* of bullock-carts, plunging oxen, and terrified passengers. He had begun to fear that the fight was lost, and that his sepoys would desert him to save their own lives, when a long-drawn howl, like that of a jackal-leader calling to his pack, was heard above the confusion. Immediately, the dacoits, with a scornful cheer, abandoned the battle and melted away. Ashcroft's heart sank. Obeying a sudden impulse, he rushed towards Tantia's cart.

"Is all well?" he cried to Luximon.

"All is well," the naik replied. "We have kept good watch over our prisoners, although we have been sore pressed, and the bullock-cart plunged headlong into the jungle and was almost upset."

"I must see to it myself; bring a light," was Ashcroft's excited order.

A torch was brought forward, and Ashcroft scanned the interior of the cart.

"Look!" he said bitterly to the guard. "See how ye have obeyed my commands! Where is the corpse of Tantia Bheel?"

The sepoys fell back stunned with amazement. The torchbearer retreated half a dozen paces and stood still. "Verily," he whispered, "Tantia is a demon. He was dead, but his spirit has stolen his body away."

The sepoys trembled. They saw their giant leader, livid with rage and clutching the hilt of his mighty sword, looking with fierce hungry eyes into the heart of the jungle, and they prayed that the word would not be spoken which would make them follow him to seek its hidden terrors.

For a moment Ashcroft hesitated — then sheathed his sword.

"I have failed," he said.

And five minutes later the caravan was again making its wearisome way through the forest.

HIS BEST ADVICE.

THE young man had just been admitted to practise at the Bar. He sat within the bar enclosure, speculating upon the chances of clients coming to him, by mistake or otherwise. He heard his name spoken, and started to his feet.

"Mr. De Novo, the prisoner at the bar is unable to employ counsel. Will you defend him?"

"Certainly, your honour. May I retire with him for a few moments' consultation?"

"Yes; and give him your best advice."

A hardly perceptible sneer curled his honour's lips as he uttered these last words, but the young man did not appear to notice it. Motioning the prisoner to follow him, he passed into the outer room. The door was closed, and for ten minutes the lively chatter of many conversations filled the court-room. Then the young man strolled into the room and dropped into a chair. The crier proclaimed, "Silence in the court-room!" His honour gazed upon the young man and said:

"Are you ready to proceed?"

"Yes, your honour."

"Where's the prisoner?"

"I really don't know."

"What?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Mr. De Novo, will you explain what you mean by this most extraordinary conduct?"

"Your honour told me to give him the best advice I could, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"May it please the Court, when I consulted him I found he was guilty and had really no defence whatever. So, in pursuance of your honour's so kindly meant suggestion, I advised him to drop out of the window and make himself as scarce as possible. I presume—in fact, I know—that he followed the first part of my advice, and I believe he will also observe the rest of it."—From *Tit-Bits*.

THE MEN WHO DISCOVERED THE WORLD.

By WALTER DEXTER.

Illustrated by WALKER HODGSON, and from Old Prints.

IN the days of prehistoric man every step the savage took beyond the immediate vicinity of his cave dwelling was a journey of discovery.

For our own part, the story of discovery begins here at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean, comprising the countries of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Greece.

The first voyagers were the Phœnicians, who passed the Pillars of Hercules, and came as far north and west as Cornwall, where they traded for tin. According to the ancients, the Straits of Gibraltar, called by them the Pillars of Hercules, were the extremities of the known world, and those who ventured beyond them were destined to fall off the edge of the earth, which at that time was considered flat. How very little they really knew of the earth is proved by the fact that their central sea was called the Mediterranean (the middle of the earth).

The Greeks were the second great discoverers. Headed by Alexander the Great they waged great wars of cŏnquest and became the rulers of Persia, India, and Egypt.

Then Rome became master of the Mediterranean, and France, Germany and Britain were added by Julius Cæsar to the then known world.

All this happened before our era, before the birth of Christ. Then came the fall of the Roman Empire, and with it a period of lethargy. Our Norse ancestors, however, were showing signs of unrest. During this period they commenced sea-roving and land-grabbing—a propensity which other

FERNANDO MAGELLAN.

The first circumnavigator of the globe. Born 1470 at Villa de Sabroza, Portugal. Sailed through the Straits of Magellan, November 28th, 1520. Died in a conflict with the people of Zebu, April 27th, 1521.

VASCO DE GAMA.

Portuguese navigator, born at Sines, Alemtejo. Sailed from the Tagos July 8th, 1497, and four months later rounded the Cape of Good Hope, arriving at the Malabar Coast, May 20th, 1498, where he had many adventures. He died at Cochin on Christmas Eve, 1525.

nations consider to be still characteristic of our race.

In the east the Mongol Empire had reached its zenith, and in the thirteenth century several Franciscan friars visited Karakorum, the Great Khan's capital. Unfortunately, most of the reports brought back by them were grossly exaggerated, but one traveller accurately described his journeys, and set them down in writing for the benefit of future generations. This was Marco Polo, the first great European traveller, who was born about the year 1250. He was the son of a Venetian merchant, Nicolo Polo, who, at the time of his son's birth, was on a journey through Central Asia, accompanied by his brother, Maffeo. Some twenty years later the travellers returned with a message from the Great Khan to the Pope, asking for instructors of religion to teach his people.

Marco was now a young man, and on their return journey, two years later, he accompanied his father and uncle. His account of the journey and of the strange sights he saw forms the first really reliable book of travel we have. The Great Khan took a liking to Marco, and for many years kept him in his Empire, giving him high and important offices.

Progress has always spread westward, and although Marco Polo's voyage is of the utmost importance, for he visited a mighty and extensive territory, yet the lands he made known to the world were already thickly peopled, and, what was more, they were already civilised.

For some considerable period the world remained unknown so far as man's records assist us, and the next discoveries of any importance were made by Prince Henry of Portugal in the early part of the 15th century. The Prince had perfected the astrolable, the forerunner of the sextant, and directed voyages by means of which the northern portion of the west coast of Africa was explored. Cape Verde was rounded in 1443, and for the first time it was seen that the coast trended eastward. Forty-three years later Bartholomew Diaz doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and proved correct the idea which Prince Henry had put forward, viz., that there was another way to India than the one then known. For many years after the Prince's death the Portuguese endeavoured to reach India by this eastward passage.

In the meantime a Genoese mariner had conceived a plan of reaching India by the great sea to the west. This was Christopher Columbus. Born at the seaport of Genoa, he had opportunities of becoming acquainted

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

Born at Hayes, Devon, 1552. At Oriel College, Oxford, for a short time. In 1569 served with a body of volunteers in the French Huguenot army, and was for several years in command of an English company in Ireland. Visited Virginia in 1584, and introduced the cultivation of tobacco and the potato into Europe. Raleigh was one of the first courtiers, soldiers and mariners of his time. Was executed on October 29th, 1618, after a long term of imprisonment in the Tower of London.

with all that was necessary to make him a practical seaman, and in early life settled at Lisbon, the great commercial centre of the day. Here he heard of the Italian Toscanelli, and his ideas of reaching China by the sea westward. These views were readily adopted by Columbus. Moreover, it is said that his views were strengthened by the reports of the Icelanders, whom he had previously visited, that they knew of a great land to the west, and that some of their numbers had visited it. The Portuguese, to whom Columbus addressed himself, were not interested in his plan; they had their own idea of the eastward passage, as we have seen. In Spain, however, after a great deal of difficulty, he had better success, and in 1492 he was appointed Admiral and Viceroy of all the lands he might discover. In August of that year he started on his great voyage of discovery with three small ships. For a month they ploughed the sea; the men became mutinous and wanted to return, but Columbus succeeded in pacifying them for the time. A few days later a variation was noticed in the pointing of the compass, a phenomenon which had never before been remarked. This was the cause of great consternation among the crew. Twelve days later land was descried by Martin Pinzon, but the ships altered their course, and the land vanished. Still, however, various signs of habitation, birds hovering over the ship, herbage fresh and green floating in the waters around them, gave the fearful crew more courage. But this did not last long, and again the men rebelled, and for some days the intrepid voyager, determined to push on at all costs, was at open variance with his crew. At last on the 11th October, at sunset, a light was seen by Columbus, and the next morning the Admiral and his men landed on Watling Island, to which Columbus gave the name of San Salvador. The inhabitants of the island were frightened at the sudden and mysterious appearance of the gorgeously attired visitors, and fled from them, only to return later on and prostrate themselves at the feet of the Spaniards. None the less interesting were the natives to the discoverers; they were brown, and Columbus, supposing himself to be on the coast of India, called them Indians, a name by which the aborigines of the New World are known to this day. Thus was the New World discovered. One of the finishing

CAPTAIN JAMES COOK.

Born October 28th, 1728, at Marton, Yorkshire. Joined the Royal Navy in 1755. As lieutenant in the *Endeavour* sailed round the Pacific in 1769. Visited Otaheite, New Zealand, Australia, and Batavia, and returned to England in 1771. Was killed by natives of the Sandwich Islands at Hawaii, February 14th, 1779.

JAMES BRUCE.

The celebrated African traveller. Born at Kinnaird House, Stirlingshire, December 14th, 1730. Educated at Harrow. Had many stirring adventures when exploring Arabia and Abyssinia. Died in 1794 from falling down the staircase of his own house.

MUNGO PARK.

Born at Fowlshiels, Selkirkshire, September 20th, 1771. Studied medicine, and was assistant surgeon on the *Worcester* East Indiaman when he visited Sumatra. Made several journeys into the interior of Africa, and in 1806 was drowned while endeavouring to escape from unfriendly natives.

touches was given to this discovery by Amerigo Vespucci, who in 1501 made the first southerly voyage, visited South America, and proved that the land discovered by Columbus was but a continent between Europe and Asia. Thus it was that the great country became known as Ameriga, or America.

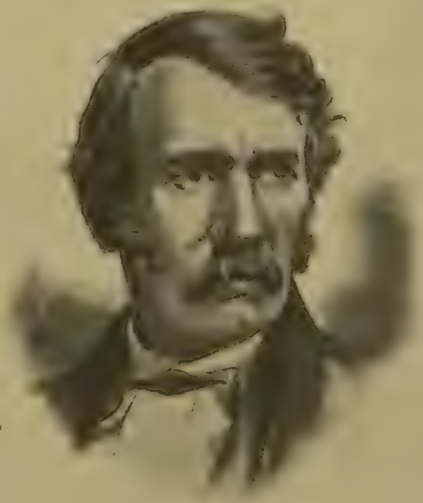
Fired by the reports of Columbus' discovery, John Cabot, a Venetian, residing in Bristol, obtained from King Henry VII. letters patent to try to reach the New World by a northerly passage. This was in 1496. Newfoundland was reached, and the travellers sailed as far south as Florida, whence they returned. The voyage, however, cannot be regarded as a successful one; but it was the first English voyage of discovery, and even if for this alone must on no account be overlooked.

In the meantime the Portuguese were still hard at work. In 1497, eleven years after Diaz had rounded the Cape, Vasco da Gama followed in his wake, and reached Natal on Christmas Day of that year.

The first circumnavigation of the earth was accomplished in 1519-22. Fernando Magellan, a Portuguese, was ordered by the King of Spain to sail on until he discovered the end of the land. After overcoming many difficulties Magellan discovered and threaded the straits which bear his name. He was killed in a skirmish with some natives of the Celebes group of islands; but one of his vessels, the little *Victoria*, reached Cadiz, September 7th, 1522.

We now come to the most glorious days in England's history, the spacious times of Queen Elizabeth. Following the course of Magellan, Sir Francis Drake sailed round the world in 1577-79. In the previous year Martin Frobisher set out to find a north-west passage to China, and discovered the bay since named after him. Along with such men we must not omit a mention of Sir Walter Raleigh, who visited Virginia in 1584, and brought back the tobacco and potato plants.

As yet, we have made no mention of Australasia, yet it was by no means unknown. To Captain James Cook we owe most of, if not all, our knowledge concerning that continent. But before his time a Spaniard, Luis Lopez de Villalobus, following Magellan's route, discovered several of



DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

Born in Lanarkshire, March 19th, 1813. Went to work in a cotton mill at age of ten. Taught himself classics, and took medical degree at Glasgow in 1840. Sailed as a missionary for Kuruman, from which centre he travelled about Africa. In 1849 discovered Lake Ngami, and crossed Africa from the Zambesi to the Congo. Followed the Zambesi to its mouth and discovered the famous Victoria Falls. Made journeys into the interior in 1858 and 1866, and discovered Lakes Nyassa and Bangweolo. Died at Ulala, May 4th, 1873.

the Polynesian Islands. The Dutch also played an important part in the discovery of different parts of Australasia, as may be seen from Van Dieman's Land, Dirk Hartog's Island, and others named after their discoverers. Van Dieman's Land was discovered in 1642 by Abel Jansen Tasman, who named it, not as we know it, Tasmania, but Van Dieman's Land, after the Governor of Batavia, under whose patronage he had set out.

The voyages of Captain Cook are too well known to need description here. He set out with the intention of observing the transit of Venus, and after completing his astronomical observations at Tahiti, he continued his voyage till he reached New Zealand, previously discovered by Tasman. To the west of this land another was found, and the bay where he landed being full of new plants, he named it Botany Bay.

At about this time the most unexplored continent, the "Dark Continent," claimed a great deal of the attention of explorers, and James Bruce discovered the source of the Blue Nile in Abyssinia. In 1778 the African Association was formed with the object of exploring the unknown parts of that continent, and in 1795 Mungo Park was sent out to the West Coast. After many adventures, which have been duly set forth in a book of travels; he traced the greater part of the River Niger and returned. A second voyage to the Niger was made in 1805, and during a skirmish with the natives his boat was sucked into a rapid and he was drowned. The next explorer to whom we owe so much of our knowledge of Central Africa was David Livingstone. He started from the Cape in 1849, and made for the Zambesi. After five years, Loanda, on the west coast, was reached, and the whole course of the Zambesi River to its mouth on the east coast was traced.

COLONEL J. A. GRANT.

Born at Nairn in 1827. Appointed to Indian Army in 1846. Served through Mutiny, and was present at Relief of Lucknow. In 1860 he explored with Captain Speke the sources of the Nile. Died February 11th, 1892.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

Born April 16th, 1786, at Spilsby, Lincolnshire. Educated at St. Ives and Louth Grammar School. Served under Nelson, and was present at the battle of Copenhagen. Was shipwrecked on the Australian coast when the *Porpoise* was lost in 1803. First visited the Arctic regions in 1818, was knighted in 1829, and afterwards made journeys amongst the icebergs. In 1845 commanded an expedition to discover the north-west passage, and sailed with the *Erebus* and *Terror*, which were last seen on July 26th, 1845, in Baffin's Bay. It was afterwards found that the whole party had perished on the ice, June 11th, 1847.

JOHN HANNING SPEKE.

Born at Jordans, near Ilchester, on May 4th, 1827. Was the first European explorer to cross Africa from north to south. Served under Sir Colin Campbell in the Punjab, and often advanced into the unexplored portions of the Himalayas. In 1854, with Captain Burton, he explored Somaliland. Was accidentally killed on September 15th, 1864, by the discharge of his own gun.

SIR H. M. STANLEY.

Born in Denbigh, 1841. Went to U.S.A., and joined Confederate Army. Was taken prisoner, but volunteered into U.S. Navy, and became ensign on an ironclad. After acting for some time as a newspaper correspondent, was, in 1871, sent by the *New York Herald* and the London *Daily Telegraph* to find Livingstone. Spent many years exploring the "Dark Continent," and was knighted in 1899.

Thus was the "Dark Continent" traversed from east to west. On his second journey he discovered Lake Nyassa (1859). A little previous to this, fired with reports from German missionaries as to the existence of great lakes in Central Africa, the Royal Geographical Society sent out Captains Burton and Speke, who in 1858 discovered Lake Tanganyika. Burton was taken ill, and Speke had to proceed alone. During his journey he saw the great lake Victoria Nyanza, but was unable to explore it owing to a lack of boats. On his return a fresh expedition was fitted out, Captain Grant accompanying Speke, and in 1860 the Lake Victoria Nyanza was discovered. Tracing the great river which had its source in the lake, the two companions met Mr. and Mrs. Baker coming in the opposite direction. In 1864 Baker discovered another great lake, and called it the Albert Nyanza. A year later David Livingstone started off on his last journey. For several years nothing was heard of him, and in 1871 H. M. Stanley was commissioned to find him.

Before the year ended Stanley had met Livingstone at Ujiji. Two years later Livingstone died at Ulala. Stanley continued his work, and in 1876-77 traced out the course of the Congo and crossed the "Dark Continent" from Zanzibar to the mouth of the Congo.

We have said but little of Arctic exploration. The name of Sir John Franklin stands out very prominently as the great English Polar explorer. His first voyage was undertaken in 1818, and was unsuccessful. The next year an exploration by land was formed, commanded by Franklin, and one by sea under the command of Parry, who reached 114° W., and gained a £5,000 prize offered by the Government. Franklin's last voyage was taken in 1845, when he started off with the two vessels *Erebus* and *Terror*, which had been under the command of Ross in Antarctic seas, and in which 78° 8′ S. had been reached.

The two vessels were provisioned for three years, and the last news of them was received in July, 1847. The following year Richardson and Rae went by land to find traces of this expedition, and six years later Rae obtained news from an Eskimo that the expedition had been seen near King William Land four years previously. It was not until 1859 that the remains were found, together with Franklin's journal of the expedition for the years 1845-48.

Coming to more recent years, we find Dr. Nansen, in 1895, reaching to within 250 miles of the North Pole, an achievement that was afterwards beaten by Commander Peary, who approached about 30 miles nearer; while in the Antarctic regions, the Newnes-Borchgrevink Expedition went "farthest south" in 1900, a record which was in its turn eclipsed two years later by Captain Scott, of the *Discovery*.

STORIES OF STOWAWAYS.

FOUNDED ON FACT.

By ANDREW HENRY LOWE.
AUTHOR OF "OUR CABIN TABLE," &c.

Illustrated by E. S. Hodgson.

II. WHERE ARE THEY HIDING?

"I SAY, Mr. Purser!"

"Yes, Mr. Welch?"

"As the Mersey tunnel is finished, a lot of men and boys have been paid off. What with this and the unemployed, there are thousands over in the city and here in Birkenhead out of work."

"Oh!" I said, "and that means stowaways, I suppose?"

"Yes. It has been something dreadful of late. One or two tramp steamers have discovered so many of them after leaving, that they have actually had to return to the nearest port to land them; afraid of running short of food."

"Yes, we were hearing of the unusual number trying to make a shift for the winter, poor chaps!"

"Well," continued Mr. Welch, "as you won't be able to cope with them yourselves, we have arranged for several detectives, who understand the nooks and corners of a ship, to give your people a hand to search on the eve of sailing. The 'City' boat goes out with the same tide, and they'll overhaul you both on Friday night, after the cargo is all on board, and stand by you till your hawsers are cast off at daylight on Saturday morning."

"Very good. I'll let the officers know. I've no doubt they'll be glad of the assistance."

"All right. As they'll be on watch for some hours, you might kindly see that they have coffee and something to eat, if they want it."

"Certainly; we'll see to that with pleasure. Better, perhaps, to arrange that they should have supper with us."

"Thanks. I'll let Ridd, the head detective, know, and he'll send you word when they're likely to board you. He's a very sharp fellow, and you'll find him intelligent and agreeable."

Neither Mr. Welch nor I foresaw what an exciting time Mr. Ridd was going to have, nor how much his sharpness was going to be put to the test.

The scene was Morpeth Dock, Birkenhead. By the Friday night at nine o'clock our cargo was all shipped, and the loading stages were withdrawn. Communication between the big steamer and the shore was practicable by one narrow gangway only, and a burly quarter-master was stationed at the head of it with strict orders to allow no one on board who had not business with the ship.

The *City of Calcutta* was lying ahead of us, and the detectives came from that vessel to make a search of ours, the s.s. *Corean*, of the "Allan Line."

They had found twenty stowaways—men and boys—on the "City" steamer, and had turned them ashore.

Before proceeding to go over the ship, the party of us who were to lead the hunt met in the mess-room for a bite of supper. These were Mr. Ridd, his two assistants, our Second, Third, and Fourth officers, the Chief Steward and myself.

"Well, I'm blest, but here's a fine go," said Ridd, as we sat down at table. "Three boys have managed to get on board of you within the last hour or so; even after the withdrawing of your stages and when everything was quieted down."

"That be blowed for a cuffer," said the Second officer. "How the dickens could they get aboard? It's not possible."

"But I tell you they *are* on board," retorted Ridd, testily. "Do you mean to say that I don't know what I'm talking about?"

He seemed to be much piqued. He was a thin, wiry man, with a keen eye, and a determined face. He had been to sea, but had given it up after an accident. He walked with a slight limp, but was said to be possessed of enormous strength, and he

had a good reputation as a detective. He practised on his own account.

"How did they get on board?" asked the Fourth. "From the watch we've been keeping all round, they couldn't have climbed up the side at any point. The gangway was the only way, and the quarter-masters haven't left it unguarded for a minute since morning."

"That was the way they came on board, all the same," replied Ridd, sarcastically.

"But how?" I asked. "They must have adopted some ruse."

"You have it, Mr. Purser: they managed it by bluff—sheer, downright, very clever bluff. I know them.

"I've turned them off ever so many steamers within the past few weeks, and once or twice they've nearly been too cute for me. They're a sharp party, I can tell you. One of them, a lad named Murphy, has a head on his shoulders. He does the thinking, and the planning, and I shouldn't wonder if we had trouble in ferreting them out to-night.

"Where do you think they were stowed away the last time I found them? Why, in one of the boats on the bridge deck. Sly young rascals! They'd stolen on board in the darkness thirty-six hours before she was going to sail, and had crept unseen into the boat twenty-four hours before our search began. I didn't know for certain that they'd boarded her, but I suspected as much. We found a number of jokers here and there, but although I prolonged the search on purpose, we couldn't come upon this precious trio.

"I suggested trying the boats, but the Second said it was useless, as he'd had a man on the bridge deck all day who'd been round the boat covers and found the lacings all fast.

"I was down the gangway, on my way home, after leaving instructions with one of my assistants—Mitchell, there—who was to stand by her till she sailed in the morning—when a sudden determination seized me to have a look at those boats. Sure enough, we found them, lying as quiet as mice in the fore-part of the port life-boat."

"And how long do you say they had been there?" I asked. The interest of those present was now aroused in the three boys.

"Twenty-four hours."

"They were fighters! They must have been starving."

"Oh, they've endurance and pluck enough. They told us they'd spent the time sleeping and telling stories. They'd provided themselves with some bread and a bottle of water."

"They must be lads of some grit," I said.

"Yes, they're right enough; decent, hard-working boys, of fairly well-doing people; but, like so many more, they're out of work and half-starving, and mad to get away to sea."

"And how did you get to know they'd come on board of *us?* You haven't explained that yet," said the Second officer.

"Ah!" and the detective gave a chuckle of self-satisfaction, "that's just where we come in and shine, while you people get fooled. I'm not paid for this job for nothing. It's a good one; but I wouldn't have so many steamers on hand if I let my wits go a-wool-gathering or allowed myself to be easily guyed."

"Oh, no doubt you're wonderfully smart at finding stowaways," growled Mr. Andrews, the Third officer, whose position on board made him specially responsible regarding this matter.

"The quarter-master at the gangway told me on my coming on board, that you were standing by, talking to him, when two boys came up with a clothes-bag for one of the men forward," said Ridd, addressing Mr. Andrews, upon whom he had fixed a severe eye.

"That's so; what about it?" replied the Third, snappishly, riled by the detective's cocky tone.

"Well, that was a pure guy," said Ridd in a provokingly sarcastic strain. "Half an hour before that, as I learnt from the watchman at the gate and also from the quarter-master, a lad appeared with a letter for the bo's'un, saying it was very important and he must see him, as he was to get an answer. He was quite polite and seemed anxious about the message. He said he believed there was money in the letter. This fetched, and he fooled and got past them both.

"That was the lad Murphy, and without a doubt the letter had been faked up by himself. Then, along came his chums, Paddy and Joe, with a faked-up clothes-bag, and played the game with equal success."

The detective laughed derisively.

"But look here," said Mr. Andrews, somewhat hotly, "the boys with the bag asked for the man whose name was on the label, a sailor called Ross, and were able to describe him. I questioned them myself."

"Quite so. How easy for a sharp lad like Murphy to get into talk with some of

BUT IT WAS NOT THE WONDERFUL THREE.

your hands ashore, and learn all that was needed to make his plan work out beautifully with you people! His game certainly wouldn't have gulled me."

The Third was about to retort angrily when Ridd, who was not without tact, perceiving that he had gone far enough, jumped to his feet, saying:

"Well, the young villains have been cute enough to gain their point, so far. They've got on board, and the question now is—*where are they hiding?* As we've finished supper, we'd better get to business at once."

Joined by a number of the crew, we began our search, perhaps the most prolonged, the most exciting that ever took place for stowaways.

A couple of men were posted at each of the companions leading from the 'tween decks, and we started at the after-wheelhouse, working systematically forward with a vigilance that was most thorough.

As we were filled right up to the spar deck, there was little chance of any one being stowed away in any of the cargo spaces. To hide in these parts before the battening down of the hatches was possible, but it would have meant death, especially on so lengthy a voyage as we were making—to the River Plate.

From various quarters there were rooted out a number of men and boys who were marched down the gangway as they were discovered; but there was no sign of Murphy, Paddy and Joe.

"Hullo! What's this?" cried Ridd, of a sudden, shining his bull's-eye on an object lying in the starboard waterway forward of the bridge. "Ah!" he continued, "this is the faked-up clothes-bag, addressed to the man Ross. We'll have a look at what's inside."

Tumbled out on deck, its contents proved to be nothing but pieces of brick and old newspapers.

We had already learnt from the bo's'un that the letter delivered to him by the lad only conveyed the words: "*Very sorry I can't get down to say good-bye to you.—Jim,*" and that he did not know from whom it had come. Clearly these youngsters had their wits about them, and we recommenced the hunt with increased vigour.

In a compartment down number one hatch, there was some live-stock belonging to an old Scotch farmer who was going out with us. It consisted of a number of prize sheep and a fine Clydesdale horse. This was the last place we had to search before entering the forecastle, in front of which had been stationed one of Ridd's assistants and two men, to stop all exit from the men's quarters while we went below.

"Ho, ho," shouted Ridd, as he flashed his light into a sheep-pen, "I have them."

But it was not the wonderful three.

No fewer than four lads had curled themselves up amongst the muttons, each in a separate compartment, and, strange to say, the usually timid animals did not appear affrighted through their close proximity—I suppose on account of their having been there for some hours and lying very quietly.

There was a quantity of hay in a corner, and taking hold of a pitch-fork that was lying handy, Ridd prodded it viciously with the handle.

"I've a good mind to give 'em the prongs," he growled.

His prodding and poking having no effect, the detective took off the top heap, saying: "Come on, boys. Let's get up and jump on it."

When this performance had been gone through by the eight of us present, Ridd declared, "I guess there's no one there, or that would have made him squeak, if not glad to come out to get broken bones mended."

We next made a most minute examination of the forecastle, where three men were found trying to steal a passage, but not a trace could be discovered of the boys who were the chief objects of our quest.

The boats had certainly not been overlooked, nor any other possible place, yet they were still lying *perdu*.

Our exertions had been lengthy and fatiguing, and we returned to the messroom for coffee, a smoke, and a parley. Ridd, although so thin and wiry, was in a perspiring state, perhaps largely through vexation.

On Mr. Andrews' face there was a grim look, as though he relished the baffllement of the detective.

"Is there any place you can think of that we've overlooked?" Ridd asked the Second.

"I can think of none. I can't make it out. If the hatches hadn't been battened down when they came on board, I should say they must be down amongst the cargo, but that's impossible."

The detective wiped his forehead. His chagrin was extreme.

"By thunder!" he exclaimed angrily, "when I get hold of them I'll go for them, especially that young Murphy. There's

nothing for it but to try over the whole ship again. There's one place we haven't thought of—they may have gone aloft somewhere."

"Only to be discovered at daybreak," sneered Andrews.

"Oh, hang it all," roared Ridd, "couldn't they sneak aloft till the search was over! It's little wonder that some vessels have so many stowaways."

"Well, the finding of these three appears to be too much for *you*," said the Second, with some warmth.

"Come, come," I said, perceiving a storm brewing. "Time's getting on, and I'm soon for bed. We'd better start at once, if we're going to try again."

"Right you are," said Ridd. "I, for one, won't leave off till I find them, and find them I must."

So we went over the vessel once again, going so far in our eagerness as to poke into all sorts of unlikely places, and sending men aloft with lanterns. But it was of no use. The elusive three could not be found.

MURPHY, PADDY AND JOE WERE BEING QUIZZED BY OUR GOODHEARTED CHIEF COOK.

Ridd, who was now perfectly furious and swearing like a trooper, had to admit that he was completely at a loss — *done properly* by the cunning of the lad Murphy.

He declared that, tired as he was, he would remain on board till we sailed in the morning. The rest of us went off to our bunks, leaving the field to be prowled over by him and his two assistants.

I must have dreamt of our search all night, and was still at it when the steward brought me a cup of tea half an hour before our departure.

"Are they found yet?" I asked.

"No, sir, and the detective is fair blazing mad. He says he'd like to have a word with you. Shall I tell him to come down?" The steward's eyes were dancing with merriment.

"No; I'll get up and see him on deck. . . . So, you've failed?" I said to Ridd, whom I found jaded and disconsolate.

"I have," he replied, bitterly. "I'd give a ten-pound note to find them now. I say, Mr. Purser, will you do me a favour—will you drop me a note from Madeira, saying where they were hidden?"

I promised, and this seemed to soothe him a little. He stood on the dock and watched us with a longing eye as we hove out, and I fancied he would fain have been going with us, in his desperation to solve the problem.

Next day, Sunday, about two o'clock, I was informed by a quarter-master that three stowaways had just appeared.

Going along to interview them, I found the invincible Murphy, Paddy and Joe standing abreast of the galley, where they were being quizzed by our good-hearted Chief Cook, Tom Fraser. Mr. Andrews was also standing by.

"That blooming detective was beautifully bluffed after all," said the latter, laughingly. "Where do you think they were all the time, Mr. Purser?—*under the hay!*"

"What! under the hay?"

"Yes," said Tom.

Poor little fellows! they were looking dirty and very hungry.

"Did you feel us jumping upon you?" I asked.

"Yes, sir," replied Murphy, a bright-looking lad with a fine face, "and it was summink awful!"

I regarded them with interest. What desperate straits they must have been in not to cry out!

"Well," I said, "you've got some pluck, lads. Give them a good square meal, Tom, and we'll set them to work to-morrow."

We put Paddy under the Mate, to work with the sailors; Joe was relegated to the galley, and Murphy we gave to Mr. Ewart, the farmer, to help him with his animals; and very industrious, well-behaved boys they proved.

I sent Mr. Ridd a picture-postcard from Madeira. It ran:

"When you next suspect that stowaways are concealed under a load of hay, it would be as well to remove the hay, and not be content with merely jumping on it."

I could see his face as he read it.

The Match that Failed.

I'M not a pocket Hercules,
A G. O. Smith or Vassall;
Posters, not goal-posts, are my line,
(A long way "after" Hassall.)

And why I said I'd play at all
I really can't remember;
I know at least I shan't forget
Last fourteenth of December.

"Good man! I knew you'd play for us;
We're short," said Sykes, the captain;
I'm not, so felt quite chilly in
Sykes' togs that I was wrapped in.

"Where will you play, Jones—on the wing?
Or 'back,' if you would rather?"
"No, keeping goal's *my* line," I said,
(One can't get back much farther!)

I kept the goal. And it kept me
More busy than I'd reckoned;
The other side were in our "ring"
Quite every other second.

They soon got six or seven goals—
About a goal a minute—
Till, bruised and laughed at, I got wild;
The prize-ring wasn't in it.

I kicked the ball, or some one's shins,
I punched it, very wildly,
And caught their "centre" in the jaw,
Who didn't take it mildly.

We had a lovely fight, till we
At last were pulled asunder,
To my regret, because just then
I'd got him nicely under.

Warned off, all bruised, Sykes' shirt in rags,
I hastily retreated,
And safe at home, I now enjoy
A game of football—seated!

REGINALD RIGBY.

JANUARY CELEBRITIES.

By Readers of "The Captain."

CHARLES JAMES FOX—LORD CURZON—JAMES WATT—ROBERT BURNS —MOZART—BEN JONSON—SCHUBERT—THE KAISER.

Charles James Fox.

CAN a politician preserve his individuality? A study of the lives of England's leading statesmen would almost lead one to the belief that in the majority of cases the man is subordinated to the politician. Only very rarely is he who consistently asserts his individuality able to make a mark in the political world. Yet such a one was Charles James Fox. Born on January 29, 1749, amidst home influences far from conducive to the fashioning of a sound character, he took to gambling at an early age. But this unhealthy pastime, though it caused

THE RT. HON. CHARLES JAMES FOX.
From an engraving. Rischgitz Collection.

him, much misery, was not able to obscure his natural genius. All those with whom he came into contact were astonished at his ready wit and charmed by his easy graciousness. As a debater he was believed by his contemporaries to be unrivalled. The magic charm of all his speeches lay in the fact that he threw his heart and soul into the subject at issue. No one could accuse him of arguing against his conscience. He always —and herein, perhaps, lies the secret of his non-success as a statesman—said what he believed, without any ambiguity. Party, to him, was never a matter of importance—he viewed every question on its merits and ascertained whether the "pros" or the "cons" preponderated. Liberalism was his watchword—he was, in fact, the first of Liberals and the first of Radicals. Imbued with these great principles, such matters as the Abolition of Slavery, Parliamentary Reform, and the French Revolution did not appear to him as to his great rival, Pitt. Whereas the first consideration of the latter was his majority in the House of Commons, Fox always asked the question, "What is justice?" Such a policy in those days could not beget success, and therefore he never attained the distinction he deserved. Not for more than a year during the whole of his career was he in office, and even that period was one of strife, first with his master, the stubborn, self-willed George III., then with his colleague, Lord North.

In 1806 he died, and with him passed away one of the last types of the old English character. Too much addicted to gaming and wine-bibbing perhaps he was, but first and above all his life was one of principle—the principle of Justice and Freedom.

F. C. ROGERS.

Lord Curzon.

GEORGE NATHANIEL, LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON, who was born on January 11, 1859, is the eldest son of Lord Scarsdale. He was made a peer in his own right when he was appointed Viceroy of India, and in this capacity, with a firm, stern hand, he put down injustice to the natives, thus winning their confidence and loyalty. No better proof of Lord Curzon's able management of the Indian

army is required than that he was enabled, at very short notice, to send no fewer than 12,000 British soldiers to the front at the beginning of the Boer War. During his period of office India improved considerably and continued to prosper. His sympathy during the terrible famine was plainly seen when he travelled through the country to relieve the distressed. The grand coronation festival called the Durbar was arranged by him and honoured by the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, with whom he travelled through the country. After six years of very hard work for the Empire, he gave up his position as Viceroy. He resigned, chiefly, because he wanted to rule the army of India as well as the country itself. To this, Lord Kitchener objected, and the Government of England favoured the latter's view of the matter.

Lord Curzon is a great traveller, and has written largely on Far Eastern topics. His late wife was a daughter of Mr. Leiter, the American millionaire. Throughout Lord Curzon's tenure of his viceregal office, she was all that was tactful and helpful and sympathetic, and won the love of the millions who lived under her husband's rule. The lamented death of this gifted lady took place shortly after Lord Curzon's return to England.

WILLIAM GEORGE FULLER.

James Watt.

JAMES WATT was born on January 19, 1736. He was the son of a well-to-do builder and carpenter in the Scottish town of Greenock, on the Firth of Clyde. He was sickly from his earliest years, and was long unable to go to school, or to join in the games of other boys of his age. To amuse him during his long hours at home, his mother taught him to draw, and his father gave him some tools, which he soon learned to use very neatly. When he grew older, he was given employment in his father's workshop, where he soon became so handy that the workmen said "little Jamie had a fortune at his fingers'-ends." When he was about twenty years of age, James set up in business for himself in a little shop in Glasgow. Despite the claims of business, he found time to read books on almost every scientific subject, and also to make experiments. About three years after he had started "for himself," his thoughts were turned to the steam-engine. Before the time of Watt, attempts had been made here and there to construct an engine moved by steam for the purpose of pumping water or for lifting weights. One to experiment thus was Newcomen, who built an engine for pumping water, but this proved to be of little or no use. Watt had to employ smiths from different places to make the different parts of his engine. Glasgow at that time provided but indifferent mechanics, and he was often plunged in despair because of their bad workmanship. Furthermore, he got into debt through neglecting the work necessary for the support of his family. At last, however, he was fortunate enough to find a friend in Birmingham who promised to pay his expenses —Matthew Boulton, the owner of a great factory. In Birmingham, Watt found better workmen, and he started a business there. About eleven years after he first thought of making an engine, he had the pleasure of seeing his invention pump water out of mines, and, after a while grind corn, saw timber, coin money, drive ships on the water, and spindles and looms in the factory. He lived to a good old age, dying in 1819.

JAMES WATT.

After the painting by Sir W. Beechey. Engraving, Rischgitz Collection.

ANDREW P. MACMEEKEN.

Robert Burns.

A SCOTCH lad has not far to seek for a January celebrity, for the very mention of this month brings up to his mind the immortal "25th." On this day there was born the idol of Scotland, the Ayrshire ploughman, Robert Burns. His father was a dour,

ROBERT BURNS.
From the painting by Nasmyth. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

austere farmer, who reared his family under the narrow formalisms of a cold religion. When one considers the stern upbringing of the poet, it is a matter for wonder that his poetic nature was not completely quenched and that amid such hostile influences he could pour forth his matchless gems of lyric beauty.

Burns was continually unfortunate in his farming, and in order to retrieve his losses he published a collection of his poems and songs, which was received with favour. He now obtained wealthy patronage, and was latterly appointed exciseman at Dumfries. But having an intense love of liberty, he supported the French revolutionaries, and was deserted by his patrons. Now, being unable to climb higher up the social ladder, he saw that his fate was sealed, and he became soured. So had his genius been rewarded! His lot had been cast in an unappreciative, small-souled generation. The dark shadows began to close around the great heart that had sung so nobly and so well. Amid his dark despair he took to the tavern, and wasted his heaven-born talents upon drunken boors.

Burns was a typical Scottish peasant, but he had been endowed with an extraordinarily brilliant intellect. He had a burning, impulsive nature—"my heart is completely tinder and is eternally lighted up." His passionate love of nature and the wonderful power of description with which he could convey its loveliness, are the secret of his marvellous lyrics. But the same hand could pen the stirring "Scots wha hae," and the soul-touching "Auld Lang Syne."

His Scottish dialect must ever be a barrier to that universal popularity that he might have attained in a language better known; but if genius have the inheritance of fame, Robert Burns will never disappear from the literature of the world. To a Scotsman, nothing appeals more than the flood of native feeling poured forth in his dear dialect, and in the hearts of his countrymen, Robert Burns holds a sacred place. The Ayrshire peasant is for ever enshrined as the poet of his country.

CLAUDE H. AULD.

Mozart.

IT is the night of January 27, 1756, and in the picturesque town of Salsburg, in Austria, a tiny babe has this day been born—the little Wolfgang Mozart, who is destined to become one of the greatest musicians the world has ever seen. Four years pass by, and the tiny boy is learning eagerly to play the harpsichord; he astounds everybody by his marvellous progress, and before long he is hard at work composing. Next we see him, when but six years old, starting on a prolonged concert tour with his father and his gifted elder sister, Marianne. Great is the success of the little

MOZART.
From an engraving. Rischgitz Collection.

prodigies, who are received at Court and fêted everywhere. Triumph follows triumph, and before Wolfgang is ten years old his marvellous reputation as a composer is established.

The years slip by, bringing many fresh successes in their train, and now Wolfgang approaches manhood, and leaves home to seek some permanent post. And the struggle begins. He is no longer the wonderful prodigy who has taken half Europe by storm, but a young man striving to make his way in the face of the keenest competition, and many are the disappointments he suffers. Again and again he is passed by, while other and less worthy men succeed. He supports himself by concerts, teaching, and the publication of his numerous compositions, and as time goes by he produces his magnificent operas, which are well received. His prospects brighten a little, he marries Constanze Weber, and at last the Emperor gives him a small position worth about £80 a year. Still, however, fortune disdains to smile on him; sometimes he meets with success, more often he is in distressing pecuniary difficulties. In 1790 his royal patron dies; from the new sovereign he can obtain no encouragement, and the unhappy man, harassed by want, disappointment, and hard work, breaks down in health. He produces two more operas, and, by request, starts to compose a requiem, but the long strain is beginning to tell, and his health fails rapidly. He knows full well that he is writing the sublime requiem for himself, but he struggles bravely on, and on December 4, 1791, summons a band of musicians to his room, that he may hear his requiem before he dies. A few hours later he loses consciousness, and early on the following morning he breathes his last, worn out by the continuous struggle with a cruelly adverse fate. FRANCES WHITTINGHAM.

Ben Jonson.

BENJAMIN JONSON was born on January 31, 1574. The son of a clergyman, he was placed at school at Westminster, the place of his birth. On his mother's second marriage, he was taken from school by his stepfather, a bricklayer, and introduced to bricklaying. Not liking the work, he ran away and enlisted as a soldier and saw service in Flanders. When he returned to England, he went to Cambridge, but had soon to leave, as he could not afford to stay. He took to writing for the stage to earn a living, and was encouraged by Shakespeare, who acted in one of his plays. Having fought and killed a fellow actor in a duel, he was thrown into prison, and on being released recommenced writing for the stage. In 1598 he brought out his well-known comedy, *Every Man to his Humour*. He followed it up with a play each year until the reign of James I., who made him master of the Court revels. In conjunction with two friends, Marston and Chapman, he wrote a book, "Eastward Hoe," a libel on the Scottish people. For this act of imprudence the three were imprisoned and narrowly escaped having their noses and ears cut off in the pillory. James I., who could not do without Jonson at his Court, in 1617 made him Poet Laureate,

BEN JONSON.

After the painting in the National Portrait Gallery. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

with a salary of £100 a year and a butt of canary wine from the royal cellars. In addition he enjoyed a grant from the City, but he was a prodigal soul and often in money difficulties. He died on August 16, 1637, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the "Poets' Corner." It is said that, when the stone covering his grave was being mortared down, a casual spectator of the scene gave a workman a shilling to cut the famous inscription: "O rare Ben Jonson."

Dryden, comparing the two great dramatists of the period, says: "Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing. I admire him, but I love Shakespeare." NELLIE COOKE.

Schubert, Born January 31, 1797.

THE year 1797 is conspicuous in musical history, inasmuch as it was the birth-year of the famous Schubert. His life, though short, was extremely brilliant. Among the great composers, Schubert is remarkable for his prolific genius; indeed, there seemed to be some ceaseless generator of melody in his brain which impelled him to write without intermission. As a consequence of this, he is known for the vast amount of music that he produced in his short lifetime. But he is still

SCHUBERT.
From an engraving. Rischgitz Collection.

more renowned for the spontaneity of his ideas, and for the poetic spirit with which they are imbued. Each of the great masters has developed and perfected some important branch of music. The department which Schubert perfected is that of song-writing. Never before or since have such exquisitely charming melodies been written; never has so delightful a poetical spirit been displayed. In Schubert's five hundred songs not one melody is out of place, not one poem but what is set to appropriate music. Each one was a work of art—not one note was hurried. Such work must surely be inspired—man's unaided brain seems incapable of it.

Schubert's lyrical spirit is not seen alone in his songs, but is found in his instrumental music also. In the latter, he displays a great wealth of ideas, but little learning in working them out. In his orchestral works he shows great delicacy of instrumentation, and since this was not attained by training, it may be put forward as another example of his genius.

In a lifetime shorter than that of any other musical genius, he produced over five hundred songs, ten symphonies, six masses, a host of sonatas and other pianoforte works, and a number of string quartettes, as well as several operas, cantatas, and overtures.

Schubert wrote what he alone felt to be best; he did not concern himself with other people's ideas. "Popular opinion," said Carlyle, "is the greatest lie in the world," and Schubert believed it to be. He wrote what was good and not what was convenient, and his work will live because it was impossible for him to act against that trait in his character.

GEORGE ARTHUR BIRKETT.

The Kaiser.

ON January 27, 1859, was born in the Imperial Palace at Berlin one of the greatest rulers that has benefited his country extensively in the political world—William II., King of Prussia and Emperor of Germany. During the reign of the Emperor Frederick, the Crown Prince "Wilhelm" matured his plans for his coming possession of the throne; so that, immediately on his accession (1888) he resolved to be his own master. "There is only one law, one will, and that is mine," he is said to have quoted in one of the forcible speeches of his later life, and barely two years had elapsed before his iron will asserted itself. The dismissal of Prince Bismarck from the chancellorship was the result, the young Emperor electing to steer the German ship of state alone—an act which inspired the famous Tenniel cartoon in *Punch*, "Dropping the Pilot." His anxiety to extend the petty German colonial possessions led to an increased concentration of British energy in South Africa. This ambition, and later utterances by the Emperor, gave rise to bad feeling between Britain and Germany, which it has been the policy of later years to remove, and which is now only passing away.

The energy of the Kaiser is untiring, and, never so happy as when reviewing his troops, he believes in the old saying, "Might is right." But, though well versed in the arts of war, he practises, similarly, the arts of peace. Poet, yachtsman, preacher, painter, crack shot, and hunter—he is all; and in every branch of literature he is well read.

ARTHUR O. PULFORD.

The Three Messengers.

A Tale of Indian Hill Warfare.

By CAPTAIN R. T. HALLIDAY.

THE Indian border station of which I had charge during my frontier service was a small, square, single-bastion fort, with walls of from twenty to thirty feet high, and of immense thickness, surrounding an open space in the centre. It was built on an eminence in the middle of a plain, and commanded from its turret an extensive view of the surrounding country and of the hills on either side of the wide valley. Owing to the thickness of the walls and of the barracks abutting them in the interior, the ramparts were very broad and capacious, and were protected by a parapet loopholed and embrasured for rifle or gun fire. The fort had accommodation for over two hundred men, was well supplied with stores and provisions for native troops, and contained an abundant reserve of ammunition. The water-supply could be drawn from a well inside the fort square; but it was seldom necessary to have recourse to this, as a river with excellent water ran through the valley in which the station was situated, and at no great distance from the gate of the fort.

At the time of the happenings I am about to relate, the total of human beings inside the fort was under a hundred souls, and I was the only white man among the heterogeneous lot. But the stock of rifles and service ammunition under my charge was a very tempting bait for *budmashes*, and a correspondingly heavy responsibility.

Early one morning, just after the roll-call parade, my native adjutant in a highly excited state rushed into my quarters with news of an unexpected rising of neighbouring tribesmen. They had been tempted, it transpired, by a *mullah* to attack the fort and put its garrison to the sword, in the expectation of securing the arms which they knew were collected within the walls. Already the preliminary steps had been taken to carry their project into effect, and all the passes leading to our headquarters station were in their hands.

The news had been brought in by one of the postal escort. He, with three comrades, had been riding towards the fort with the regular weekly mail from the district headquarters. In a narrow *nullah* which communicated with the adjoining valley they were ambushed by a swarm of tribesmen. His comrades, together with their horses, had been shot without warning, while he, though badly wounded, had managed to gain the shelter of the fort and give the alarm.

The news was somewhat disconcerting, but preparations for defence were at once made, and that not a moment too soon. So well had the plans for this hostile movement been laid by the wily *mullah*, that but for the escape and timely warning of the trooper, the station might possibly have been rushed and the small garrison overwhelmed unawares. The heavy gates were at once closed, the parapets manned, reserve ammunition was served out, water-buckets were placed ready for emergencies, and everything was put shipshape to accord our expected assailants a very warm reception. Within a couple of hours we could see the assembled tribesmen making their dispositions for closing around us, and soon the attempt was made to rush the fort. Thanks to our elaborate preparations this resulted in failure, and the penalty which our martinis exacted for the first daring attack caused a discreet postponement of the second. Towards dusk, however, on they came again, seemingly reinforced for the attempt to overwhelm the fort and its defenders by a combined rush from all sides. They were met with an equally vigorous fusilade, which repulsed them once more with a heavy bill of costs; and when night fell the assailants had retired to a safe distance, from which they contented themselves by sniping occasionally at the fort.

The nights at that season were of inky darkness. There was no moon, and until well on in the morning hours no glimmer relieved the dense black canopy which hung over the fort. As may be imagined, the nerves of each and all were strung to their highest pitch as we awaited an onslaught in the dark by a horde of cut-throats whose numbers we could not even guess at, and from a direction we knew not of.

MY NATIVE ADJUTANT RUSHED INTO MY QUARTERS.

When day broke and in a measure relieved the tension of the defenders, it was found that during those awful silent hours a ghastly outrage had been committed, the corpse of one of the postal escort having been fixed to the main gate by means of a spear.

Whether or not this was part of some ruse to tempt the garrison we heeded not, but placing a strong firing-party to cover the entrance to the gate we secured the body in order to accord it decent burial. The poor fellow had evidently been instantaneously killed by a bullet wound in his head, so that the mutilation of his lifeless body by the miscreants had in no way increased his suffering. But it afforded us some indication of the type of assailant we had to meet, and it increased the determination of the sepoys to exact a terrible revenge if ever the perpetrators of this outrage could be brought to book.

All next day the tribesmen lay ensconsed among the low hills and scrub around the fort, ever on the alert for an opportunity to pick off its defenders one by one. This was proved abundantly when by any chance a head or other object appeared above our parapet wall, for it was immediately made the target for a rattle of shot. The sepoys, discovering this, amused themselves by sticking up a dummy at intervals, in order to draw the fire of the enemy and thus tempt them to give some indication of their whereabouts. How I wished we had a gun with some shrapnel shell! But we had to content ourselves by returning the sniping fire, fortunately no fear of the failure of our ammunition supply disturbing our equanimity as regards material. No direct attack was made during the day, and when night fell once more we sat silently awaiting any move on the part of the besiegers. That none came was an agreeable surprise; the inaction of the tribesmen, with whom every lost day reduced their chances of success, was quite inexplicable.

The procedure on the following day was but a repetition of its predecessor, and it seemed tolerably clear that the tribesmen had learned a salutary lesson. They were either meditating some deeper scheme, or were awaiting some further reinforcement; or possibly they thought to starve us into submission—a most stupid mistake. At all events, yet another day passed with no appreciable change in the general situation, and no appearance of any relief. Truth to tell, the hope of relief for some considerable time was but a dim one, as the district head-

quarters was about a hundred and twenty miles away, and no other outpost could afford to supply the force which would be necessary to overcome the tribesmen, even should our friends become aware of our predicament. But we had no telegraph and no means of communicating our distress, a plight which the tribesmen sitting around us very well knew and appreciated.

That same evening a native havildar appeared at the orderly office, and, bringing himself sharply to attention, saluted and inquired if he might be permitted to speak. On my replying in the affirmative he said:

"Sahib want message taken to colonel. I go."

"What!" I ejaculated in some surprise. "I certainly want a message taken to the colonel very badly. But the place is surrounded by these vermin on every side; you couldn't get through! You'd be shot before you went a hundred yards for a certainty."

"Perhaps be shot, Sahib, but what for not to take message? Perhaps not. If Ghilzai man shoot, my clan will kill Ghilzais all same. I Kazza Khel man, no fear for Ghilzai; I carry message to colonel, Sahib."

I argued the point, explaining to the best of my ability the risks to be encountered and the difficulties of the proposed undertaking; but the man was firm. Indeed, he seemed only the more eager to be entrusted with this service to carry the news and bring relief to the beleaguered garrison. I make this plain because otherwise I should have blamed myself for sending this brave man to his doom; for I gave him the necessary permission, and he saluted with evident pride and left.

That night, under cover of the darkness which enveloped us, he dropped from the wall by means of a rope, and set out on his perilous journey. He carried with him a note, brief but to the point, setting forth our parlous state and the necessity for a strong force to ensure relief. When daylight dawned, the quarter guard was horrified to find, affixed to the gate and covered with wounds, a body which was identified as that of the havildar who had set out but a few hours before. The corpse was secured in the hope that a proper burial could be accorded to it later, every precaution being taken to guard against treachery or surprise. The man's rifle, ammunition belt, and message were a-missing, and he had been stabbed in the back and in the chest, and had his throat cut. This last wound accounted for the absence of any noise. Nothing further happened, and no light could be thrown on the tragedy. Another day passed without fresh developments. The *dénouement* cast a gloom over the little garrison, but there was no time for useless moping, and the continued sniping showed that the relays of the enemy were as watchful as ever.

Towards nightfall a levy trooper sought admittance to my quarters and begged an audience. With the same strict attention to the detail of discipline which is a feature of our Indian soldiers, he volunteered to become the bearer of another message to headquarters.

"Look here," I said, placing my arms on the table and looking him through and through, "a havildar came to me yesterday and offered to carry a message to the colonel. I explained the risk to him, but he still wished to go. I allowed him to go to his death: you saw his body hacked with wounds this morning. Are you prepared for this same fate?"

"Prepared for take message to colonel, Sahib," was the unhesitating reply, accompanied by the inevitable salute.

"But you can't reach the colonel, man. He is a hundred and twenty miles away, and there are hundreds of these men around who will shoot you on sight."

"Ghilzai clever man, never shoot: Ali Yussuf no bullet, all cut knife." I realised the truth of this contention that the havildar had been stabbed and not shot; but the trooper continued in the best English he could command. "Some time other man more clever: Futteh Mahommed, he other man this time. No take rifle, take two kukri."

"But even if you do take two knives, what is that against a score or two? I can't allow you to go to certain death."

"Ghilzai man never catch Futteh Mahommed. I good man, I fight for Sirkar, see!" Here the trooper turned up his sleeve and showed me the marks of wounds.

I hesitated. Here was a brave trooper ready to risk his life in my service and for the service of the Sirkar. My reluctance to give him permission he took as a want of trust in him, and from what I knew of his race no attempt on my part to explain my view would be of the slightest avail. To refuse him would be a veritable punishment worse than death itself. But I was very unwilling to let him go without a full sense of all the risks he ran. So I said to him, as solemnly as I could, "I do trust you, Futteh Mahommed,"—here he saluted in acknowledgment,—"but you must know all the risk you run." Then I enlarged on the dangers not only around us, but on the road to headquarters. I told him that his death would only deprive me of a good trooper, and that I never liked to lose a brave man. He saluted his

thanks, but still persisted in his resolve, so I gave him my sanction, much to his delight.

That same night we dropped him quietly from my own quarters in the bastion, while his comrades committed him to the care of Allah and the Prophet. I did not close my eyes during the long night, but assisted to keep eager watch with the guard. When the faintest ray of light appeared I eagerly scanned the outer gate. It was clear! But a dozen paces from the entrance lay the body of the levy trooper. He had not been shot, but the back of his head had been crashed in by a heavy instrument, and he was covered with dagger wounds. I felt a sinking sensation at my heart as his body was brought in, and I inwardly vowed that, come what might, he was the last messenger that should run this risk of murder so long as I commanded the fort.

I FELT A SINKING SENSATION AT MY HEART AS HIS BODY WAS BROUGHT IN.

Still another day passed without further mishap; and the same monotonous interchange of rifle fire at long range continued. The sepoys drew the fire by means of dummies, and replied wherever the shots appeared. They took watch and rest by turns during the day, and stood to their posts to a man during the night. I felt that as night offered the best opportunity to the tribesmen, during the dark hours our full strength was required on the alert.

At dusk, to my amazement, another havildar appeared, stood to attention and proffered the same request! But I had taken my resolve, and meant to abide by it.

"No," I said decisively, "we have lost two men, whose bodies you have seen."

His face fell at this seemingly unexpected decision, and the tone in which it was uttered.

"As sure as you leave here," I continued in explanation, "you are a doomed man: every pass and track is watched for miles around, and you couldn't escape. Why do you want to throw away your life like this?"

"Khubair Singh make discovery, Sahib. Not throw away life. I take message to colonel, Sahib, or I come back here, sure."

"You'll be carried back, you mean, and to that gate, too, in the morning. Can't you learn a lesson?"

"Never gate, Sahib. I make big discovery. Sahib, allow Khubair Singh, then colonel have message."

"What discovery have you made?" I inquired.

"Cannot tell Sahib; no savvy. Sahib know to-morrow. Khubair Singh always faithful man, good havildar, Sahib say. Good havildar take message to colonel: I sure come back, Sahib: big discovery."

Here again was this persistence, and this advancing of faithfulness in support of it. He *was* a good havildar, and I had undoubtedly said so, for there was no better non-commissioned officer in the whole battalion to which my half-company at the fort belonged. On his breast he wore the ribbons of four campaigns, and the scar on his face recalled an episode which would have gained him the Victoria Cross had his skin only been white. It seemed madness to permit such a man to throw away his life in an affair of this kind. But his discovery was a new thing. What on earth could he mean? I felt that I must know something about this fresh development if I could only draw him out.

"See here, havildar," I said. "You have served the Sirkar for thirty years——'

"Thirty-three, Sahib, in two months," he interposed.

"Well, thirty-three years, as you say. Let that pass. You have risked your life many times: did you ever risk it so foolishly as you mean to do now?"

"Khubair Singh never fool, Sahib. Big discovery——'

"Well, what's your discovery? I must know about that first," I interrupted

"Cannot tell Sahib. I go to prove discovery. I never go on gate Khubair Singh no fool, Sahib, and I go to colonel. If I no carry message, I bring back here knife killed Ali Yussuf. I serve Sirkar thirty-three year in two month; I serve forty year, sure."

In the end, despite my vow, the havildar prevailed. He seemed so keen on this daring errand, so cocksure of success, so earnest about his discovery, that I verily believe I was infected by his confidence or mesmerised by his insistence. But I could not hold out against his entreaty, and eventually I acquiesced. Two hours later I would have withdrawn my permission had I only dared, but this vacillation would have been fatal to all my influence with the native troops. The die was cast.

Khubair Singh elected to take his rifle and bandoleer, and also a knife, and when darkness supervened he made his preparations. At the last moment he asked that a dummy might be lowered over the wall in his stead, and that he should be left to his own resources. This was accordingly done, and the havildar disappeared.

If it were possible to pass a more restless night than the preceding I should say I did so. I never in all my life wearied so much for dawn. I have been since in many a tight corner, but the recollection of that night is ever most vivid in my memory. When at length the thickness of the night gave place to the faintest grey I peered at the outer gate. A cold shiver ran down my spine. There, as sure as fate, was a human body, and I cursed myself inwardly for a vacillating fool. How was I to face the General with a triple murder on my shoulders? So does conscience make cowards of us all!

But I suddenly realised that the garb on the victim was not that of a regular soldier. It was a loose overall like a jibbah. Moreover, *the body was not that of the havildar, Khubair Singh!*

What new development could this portend? Or was it only a hideous nightmare, the result of the excessive mental strain of these last three days, and the lack of sleep? I pinched myself to make sure I was really awake, and sent the quarter guard to secure the corpse. The man proved to be one of my Pathan *oont-wallahs*, and the weapon by which he had been fixed upright against the door was discovered to be the sword-bayonet of Khubair Singh!

No messenger proffered his services that evening. We all felt that the havildar would undoubtedly fulfil his promise and that my message was already well on its way to the colonel at headquarters. Our drooping spirits rose accordingly.

Four days later three squadrons of native cavalry—among the finest in the world—and fifty sowars of irregular horse entered the valley, and scattered the tribesmen like chaff before the wind. Two days more saw a strong infantry force, including a detachment of sappers, march in to the station. The sappers prepared entrenched lines beyond the outer main gate, and before the month was out we had two guns on the parapet capable of searching the whole place with shrapnel shell. There has been no further investment of that fort since that anxious time.

The plucky havildar returned with the relieving force, and then I learned from his own lips the details of his "discovery" and of his mission.

He had from the first suspected some treachery within the fort, and set himself to unmask it. His suspicions of the perfidy of one of the *oont-wallahs* who was a local Pathan, were of long duration, and were justified in a manner on the first night of the investment. Little phosphorescent glimmers at a certain part

ONCE CLEAR OF THE OUTER DEFENCES HE CAUGHT THE UNWITTING PATHAN.

of the wall betrayed to the eagle eye of the havildar that something was amiss, and the murder of the first envoy served to confirm his belief in the complicity of an *oont-wallah*. As a havildar he was not restricted in his movements, and on the night of the second murder he would certainly have captured the assassin red-handed if any attempt had been made to approach the gate. The corpse, however, was left some distance off, and the watcher was, for the time being, foiled. It was, indeed, the havildar's movements and his interference with the preconcerted signals that disconcerted the plans of the enemy and postponed their intended night attacks. Their signals had all in some mysterious manner gone wrong.

He then conceived a plan whereby he might secure the traitor, for to denounce him without abundant testimony of his treachery would have been a fatal step. When the havildar was supposed to be making his way over one part of the wall by means of the rope, he was in reality following with cat-like tread the steps of his would-be murderer. Once clear of the outer defences he caught the unwitting Pathan and strangled him forthwith in genuine Thug fashion before he could sound an alarm. He then with a grim satisfaction fixed him where the corpse was found. He used his own sword-bayonet to make good his promise that "Sahib know discovery to-morrow."

Once clear of the fort his knowledge of the mountain paths stood him in good stead. He carefully avoided all the main routes and made for the hills. There, himself a hardy mountaineer, he easily evaded observation, and by forced marching gained the nearest fort, where mounted messengers were obtained.

What might have happened to us had our outward patrols from headquarters to the fort been waylaid, and no inward message conveyed to warn them of our plight, it would be hard to conjecture. We might have held the fort till relief came; but against such odds and with treachery within our walls, our fate was in the balance. Needless to say, Khubair Singh received his due reward, as did also the recalcitrant tribes when their individual guilt was ultimately brought home; for a number of the maliks were deeply involved, and punishment for such misdeeds to be effective must be sure and salutary. And the havildar served his "forty years sure," and retired with a handsome pension.

"Sans Dieu Rien."

SO quietly does creation turn,
A-making no commotion,
That any part might squirm a bit,
We take no sort o' notion!

An' just cos this security
In our inside's implanted,
I sometimes think we human folk
Take things too much for granted.

Suppose—for instance—this 'ere Earth
When on 'er axis spinning,
Just went an' heaved a bit too far,
We wouldn't feel like grinning!

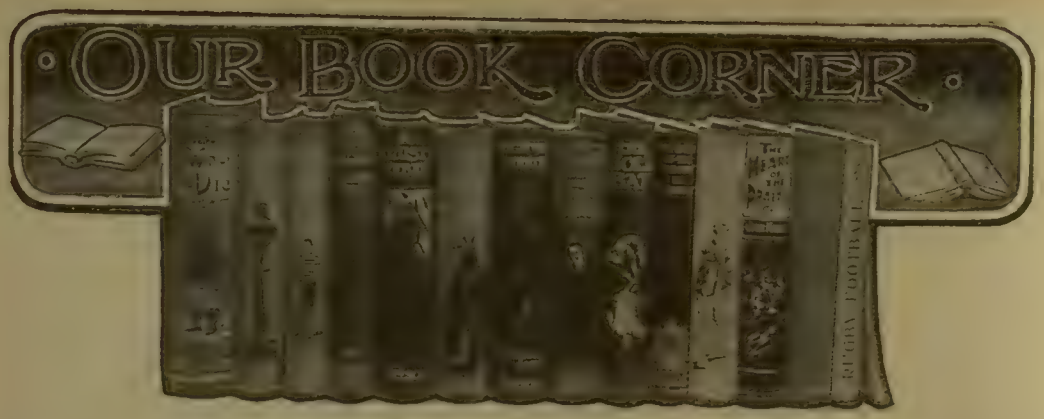
Suppose the Moon got out o' gear,
An' took to moving nearer,
I really think, tho' p'raps I'm wrong,
We might begin to fear 'er!

Suppose the Sun grew obstinate,
An' didn't start a-rising,
But took to stopping stick-stock-still,
I think we'd start surmising.

Suppose some mighty wand'ring Star
Came through this system straying,
Why sure we'd count our blots o' ink,
An' hearts 'ud start a-praying!

But just cos things are ship-shape trim,
An' all goes smoothly gliding,
We creatures in our uppishness
Forget the Hand a-guiding!

BEATRICE MOLYNEUX.

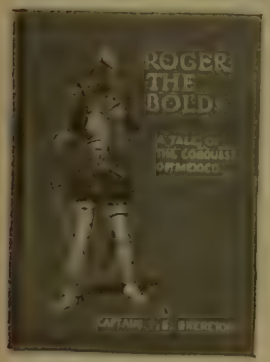


THE late G. A. Henty had many admirers among the youngsters of the ast few decades, and without doubt their admiration was, to a large extent, deserved.

The two salient characteristics of his books, which specially commended them to the fond parent in search of a book for his boy, were their thoroughly wholesome tone, which was indisputable, and their historical accuracy. The latter quality has, we venture to think, been over-estimated. It is true that the actual facts of history were correctly set forth, but it is doubtful if the true spirit of the times was invariably reproduced.

We are now informed by their respective publishers that the mantle of Henty has fallen on two gentlemen, Captain Brereton and Mr. Herbert Strang. Possibly the mantle is large enough for both. We believe that it is an accepted axiom among publishers that a boy's book must be long; in other words, that the average boy wants a lot for his money. Surely, however, there are limits, and it cannot be necessary for a book to have four hundred pages to make it attractive. Both Captain Brereton and Mr. Strang could, we are sure, practise a little compression without affecting their popularity.

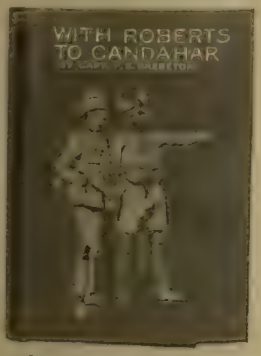
In **Roger the Bold** (Blackie and Son, Ltd., 6s.), Captain Brereton has chosen for his background the attractive period of the Conquest of Mexico.



Roger, the hero, joins an expedition which has been commissioned by Henry VIII. to explore the newly discovered country.

Roger is a great fighter, of extraordinary strength, and we read how he is put in charge of a certain gold disc, how he is robbed of it by a traitor and finally arrives in Mexico as a prisoner. There he nearly loses his life on the altar of the god of war, but he makes such determined resistance that the Mexicans think he is a god and ask him to take the post of cacique or chief. They offer to bestow upon him all their treasure if he will aid them in their fight against the Spaniards, stipulating only that he shall first recover the disc without which the hidden treasure cannot be found. Needless to say, Roger regains the disc and makes his escape from the doomed city at the psychological moment, eventually returning to England a wealthy man.

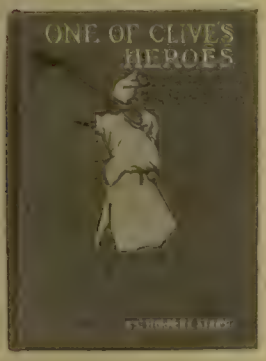
In **With Roberts to Candahar** (Blackie and Son, Ltd., 5s.), Captain Brereton strikes a more modern note. The tale opens at Cabul at the moment when the British Mission under Sir Louis Cavagnari was being attacked by the mutinous troops of the Ameer.



Major Dennison, a retired political officer, has come on a visit to Sir Louis in connection with his son's appointment, and when the Mission is destroyed, all trace of him is lost. His son, Alec, who is on his way to Cabul, escapes from the Afghans who attack his party and is appointed aide-de-camp to Sir Frederick Roberts, the Commander of the punitive expedition. After many exciting adventures he hears news of his father and ultimately effects his rescue.

Captain Brereton's books can be recommended to the youngster who likes to read of deeds of valour and adventure. The dialogue is bright, and the interest never flags.

In his book entitled **One of Clive's Heroes** (Hodder and Stoughton, 6*s*.), Mr. Strang gives us a vivid picture of life in India in 1757.

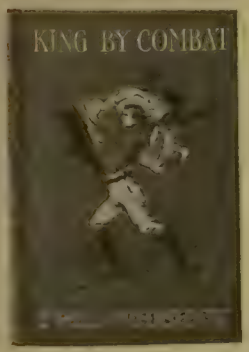


Desmond Burke, who lives in the neighbourhood of Market Drayton, has long made Clive his own particular hero, so that when he is turned out of the house by his tyrannical elder brother, he is easily induced by Diggle, the villain of the story, to sail with him to India. We read how Diggle deceives him, and treacherously sells him into slavery among the pirates of Gheria. Escaping from these, Burke makes his way to Bombay and joins Clive, under whose command he takes part in the various operations against the natives, including the battle of Plassy.

After turning the tables on his enemy Diggle, he leaves India a successful man, and settles down in England.

Mr. Strang has adopted Henty's methods with considerable success. Historical accuracy has been secured by careful study of books dealing with the period, and his knowledge of Indian life enables him to endow his story with the necessary local colour. We have already referred to the excessive length of the book, but we can find no other fault. The illustrations and excellent maps do much to enhance the interest of a brightly written story which we can thoroughly recommend.

King by Combat. By Fred Whishaw. (Cassell and Co., Ltd., 3*s*. 6*d*.) Mr. Fred Whishaw, as an author, is a curiously uncertain quantity. One knows, from just experience, that he can produce good stuff when he chooses. A recent school-story from his pen which we reviewed in these pages, though not in the author's best vein, was, at any rate, a commendable piece of work, and certainly of a quality far above the mass of fiction produced by the writers of pseudo-school tales. It is disappointing, therefore, to find in "King by Combat" an adventure story which is not particularly good and not particularly bad.



It has the air of having been written because it had got to be written—not because the author had any distinct inspiration to produce such a book, or had any special interest in the evolution of its plot or the drawing of its characters.

Notwithstanding, we recommend "King by Combat" to our readers. As a "yarn" it has merits—though rather exacting in its demands upon our credulity, perhaps, it is not very much the worse for that. Here and there are skilful touches which reveal the practised hand, and though the story is not one of those which hold the reader in a tight grip and release him only when the last page is turned, the interest is sustained. A readable tale, in short, if not a brilliant one; and in the course of a long diet of adventurous literary fare, we have had many duller companions than those lusty twins, Gog and Magog, and far less exciting experiences than the duels in which they and their companions engage for the sovereignty of the savage Bantu tribe, amongst whom they find their lot cast, and the possession of the great treasure-hoard of which the latter are the guardians. Fergus (alias Magog) *versus* Mompo (the King's lion), is as good fun as three rounds in the middle-weights at Aldershot any day.

Next Christmas we hope to read Mr. Whishaw at his best. May inspiration wait on him during the coming spring and summer!

The Life Story of a Fox. (A. and C. Black, 6*s*.) Mr. J. C. Tregarthen has produced a nature study of the first class, and one which will be welcomed by all nature students—be they eight years old or eighty. The author begins with the birth and upbringing of a fine dog fox, who tells his story himself, and from the first page to the last there is not a dull line in the narrative. Following one after the other, each in its proper place come the incidents of a fox's life. We read of the quiet, tense, unrelaxing care of the vixen to keep her family out of harm's way; of how the cub who tells the story encounters his first badger and is terror-stricken at the sight of the grim, bear-like old animal; of how the vixen returned to the lair one night covered with shot-wounds,

thus compelling the cubs to go out and kill their own supper—which consisted that night of jelly-fish; of the forest fire which nearly put an end to the fox family before they had well begun to live. Next comes the educating of the headstrong cub, the killing of his first rabbit, and the story of how the otter robbed him of a wild duck he had marked for his own. Then we read of how he takes up his quarters in a badger-earth, and, following that, his account of the hunt in which his mother is killed. The fight between the badger and the hounds in this chapter is remarkably well described. Shortly after, our fox is captured. Mr. Tregarthen devotes a delightful chapter to an account of his captivity and escape. After this, we have a description of his huntings during The Great Winter, when he goes near to starving, and then comes the finest chapter in the book—the Reign of Terror—which deals with the relentless hunting of a lonely half-wild hound who does nothing but run down and kill the foxes. In "Freed," the last chapter but one, the author shows how our fox managed to outwit this terror, and finally, how the plucky little vagrant fell into the power of a huntsman and—was spared. On the whole we doubt whether the vicissitudes of a fox's life could have been set forth more accurately or more thrillingly. "The Life Story of a Fox" is a book to get and keep, for it will stand reading time and again.

Firelock and Steel. By Harold Avery. (T. Nelson and Sons, 5s.) Mr. Avery has given us quite a good story of the usual type. Bob Gilroy, a country lad who, though an honest, good-natured fellow, displays an aversion to anything in the shape of regular work, is brought face to face with the realities of life by the sudden death of his mother and the discovery that his father is a fugitive from justice.

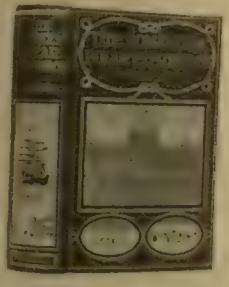
In a secret interview, his father entrusts to his care a mysterious image which, he says, is of great value. Bob is wrongfully accused of poaching and leaves his home in company with Harry Frost, the son of the village doctor. The two youngsters fall in with a recruiting sergeant and join the Rifles.

They are sent to Spain to serve under Sir John Moore, and take part in that great soldier's masterly retreat to the coast. During the battle of Corunna, Gilroy is captured and only makes his escape in time to see the last British ship disappearing in the distance.

In his despair, he follows in a small boat and is picked up by the very privateer on which his father was serving as steward when he stole the mysterious image. The captain and lieutenant discover Gilroy's parentage and make desperate attempts to regain the image. Bob, however, is able to foil them, and when at last he reaches home in safety the mystery is explained, to his no small advantage.

The story is smoothly written and the character of Gilroy is well drawn. A little compression, however, would have been an improvement.

The Romance of Polar Exploration. By G. Firth Scott. (Seeley and Co., Ltd., 5s.) This book gives a brief abstract of Polar exploration from the time when Pytheas, that bold Greek mariner, sailed North until he came to Thule (Iceland) and there turned back in uneasiness of mind at the perpetual daylight, up to Captain Scott's bold Antarctic venture of five years ago. Between these two names comes a magnificent roll of Arctic explorers, Willoughby, Frobisher, Davis, Hudson, Baffin, all searching for the North-West Passage, the immortal Franklin and McClintock, McClure, Peary and Nansen. It must give us a thrill of pride to read the English names in this scroll of glory. Nowadays, merely a sentimental interest attaches to the discovery of the Poles, but, as the old sea captain says in Millais' famous picture in the Tate Gallery, "It can be done and England must do it." What stories of heroism, of pluck, and of indomitable endurance, of strange adventures, of rescues when hope had expired; of the horror of lonely death in those vast, white, silent lands! Why, there is more romance in a single chapter of this book than in many a volume of far-fetched fiction! We meet the Eskimo roaming over his barren fields, we sit with him in his house as he eats his blubber and bear-flesh, we learn what his dogs, his sledge, his kayak are to him, we hear the bark of the white bear as he prowls round the ships at night. There are natural history notes on the polar animals, the walrus, the seal, the musk-oxen, which will be—or should



be—treasure trove to boys. And there are more than twenty full-page illustrations, one, that of the Emperor penguin, being a remarkable reproduction.

The tale of Polar Exploration could hardly be uninteresting, no matter who handled it, but as told here in this handsome, well-written volume it possesses an interest additional to its own inherent fascination. In a word, this is a splendid book.

Monitor at Megson's. By Robert Leighton. (Cassell and Co., Ltd., 3*s.* 6*d.*) "Tom Brown's School Days" is an excellent book and so is "The Prisoner of Zenda," but we had no idea of the possibility of a combination of the two until we read "Monitor at Megson's."

The heir to the throne of Leskovia is for some unexplained reason sent under the assumed name of Pierre le Roy to Haddisthorpe, presumably a small grammar school.

To the same school comes the famous Leskovian general, Count Bernoff, to keep watch and ward over Le Roy and incidentally to act as French Master.

There is much unnecessary mystery. For instance, there seems no adequate reason for why the Count should not endeavour to learn the latest news from his native land by taking in a daily paper. He does not do so, however, and it is only by chance that he reads in a stray paper, taken from one of the boys, that the King and Crown Prince of Leskovia have been assassinated and that Le Roy is now the rightful monarch. Then the Leskovian conspirators track Pierre to his school, and there are sensational developments.

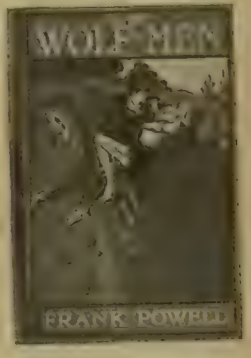
More of the plot it would be unfair to disclose, but in honesty we must add that the descriptions of school life are unreal and unconvincing, and that the whole story bristles with glaring improbabilities and pointless incidents. We think Mr. Leighton is capable of better work.

The Sinews of War. By Eden Phillpotts and Arnold Bennett. (Werner Laurie, 6*s.*) Search for treasure, hidden in distant lands, almost invariably connotes deeds of crime and blood, and this fine story is no exception to the rule. An old sea captain, Pollexfen, who possesses the secret of some treasure sunk in a swamp in Barbadoes, is murdered. Varcoe, Scotland Yard's great detective, discovers the criminal and, stepping into a room at the Corner House to make the arrest, vanishes utterly from human ken. Philip Masters takes up the trail when Varcoe disappears, and escapes the detective's fate by the merest shade. The scene then shifts from London to the sea and then to Barbadoes.

The story is of absorbing interest. Walter Pollexfen is a study of criminal character. He is not wholly bad; his liking for Masters, whose utmost endeavours are to bring him to justice, is a case in point. In ingenuity, resource, daring and unscrupulousness, he reminds us of that glorious villain the "Master" in Stevenson's "Ballantrae." Varcoe is not the conventional, fatuous detective. Conan Doyle might own him as blood-brother of the famous Holmes. Masters stands forth throughout the story, cool, indomitable, intensely English, and Mary Pollexfen is his feminine counterpart. Here and there are vivid pen-pictures of London streets and sights and sounds which Mr. Arnold Bennett can give better than any other modern writer, while Mr. Phillpotts supplies some descriptions of tropical waters which make us long to go a-sailing into those sunlit seas.

In brief, this is a thoroughly sound, workmanlike novel, and at the last page we experienced a distinct longing for "more."

The Wolf-Men. By Frank Fowell. (Cassell and Co., Ltd., 3*s.* 6*d.*) Wolf-men are not the only remarkable creatures which Mr. Powell's conventional band of intrepid explorers (including the inevitable scientific Professor, and the no less inevitable "cool-blooded" Yankee) encounter in the course of a miraculous voyage in their wonderful submarine. One naturally expects strange company in the "Under-world," as the author terms the gloomy continent which he conceives to exist in the hollow "innards" of the earth, but one is hardly prepared for such an abundance—we had almost said surfeit—of freaks as are brought upon the scene. Mud devils with "hideous heads and monster goggle eyes," luminous fungi (street lamps are not wanted in this wondrous Under-world), leviathan



octopuses, giant elks, titanic tarentulas (worshipped of the wolf-men), explosive toad-stools, and many other marvels wander on and off the stage, for all the world like the grotesque monsters in a Drury Lane pantomime. Ichthyosauri, pterodactyls, mammoths and megalosauri (carnivorously seeking the adventurer's ber-lud !) are all resuscitated to play a part in this fantastic carnival ; nor must we forget sundry items in the menagerie of the author's own ingenious invention. The bell-beetle, which produces a clanging tintinnabulation as it runs by striking with its antennæ the metallic sheathing of its back, is one of the most comic creations ever seen outside the classic "Bad Child's Book of Beasts." Add, further, the ruins of a great city in the midst of which (perpetually keeping at bay five million of wolf-men, headed by a cunning priest—of *course* a priest) lives a god-like white man, seven feet high, who rides a tame elk (of the giant species) and is the last survivor of a great and wonderful civilisation—and you have the principal features (by no means all) of this amazing "Under-world." Prodigious !

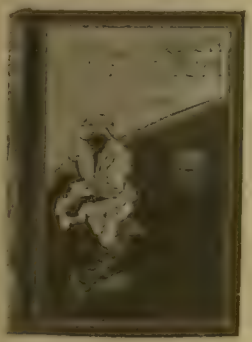
What we like about Mr. Powell is that he goes —frankly and unashamed—the whole hog. Absolutely the greatest show ever put before the public ! A portent to every page ! ! But having praised the author's inventive ingenuity we fear we cannot say much more in favour of "The Wolf-Men." Briefly, Mr. Powell has not one jot of that power of lending his work the artistic verisimilitude which constitutes, in great part, the art of such masters of the marvellous in fiction as H. G. Wells, Rider Haggard, and Jules Verne. Even his faculty for invention must be discounted by the obvious resemblance of much that he has set down to passages and incidents in "She" or "A Journey to the Interior of the Earth" —to quote only two books by the writers just mentioned. The works of Wells and Verne are adorned with a gloss of scientific accuracy, but there is nothing of that sort in the narrative under notice. However, Mr. Powell seems to be ever plausible, and though the reader pursues his narrative to the end unflaggingly, it is rather out of amused and contemptuous curiosity to discover what absurdity the next chapter will reveal, than from legitimate interest. As one who, seeing through the trick, is yet entertained to wonder whether it will be a rabbit or a pigeon that the conjurer will next produce from his hat.

The Citizen Rifleman. By E. J. D. Newitt. (Newnes 2*s*. net.) The rise of the civilian rifleman has certainly been remarkable. The man in the street who does not happen to possess a personal interest in the movement, and is reminded of it only by the newspaper reports of those periodical speeches in which Earl Roberts so persistently hammers away at his cherished scheme of a national army of marksmen, would probably be astonished to learn the number of rifle clubs which already exist throughout the country. More are being formed every month—"and more and more and more."

Most of these organisations are of the kind known as "Miniature Rifle Clubs." The members practise, that is to say, with "miniature" weapons, instead of with service arms.

It is doubtful whether infinite practice with a "miniature" rifle, firing a reduced charge at a short range, can suffice to teach marksmanship with a Lee-Enfield, or other military rifle. But it is unquestionable that by such means the eye can be trained, and experience of the essential elements of the marksman's art gained to such an extent that the rifleman proceeds from the smaller to the larger weapon with a knowledge and aptitude that render him an adept with the latter after a very short period of practice.

Mr. Newitt's volume is an admirable handbook wherein all that the citizen rifleman can desire to know with regard to the formation and management of a club, the building of ranges, the choice of arms and ammunition, and the science of marksmanship, is lucidly and carefully set forth. The illustrations of arms, &c., are good, and the diagrams illustrative of such matter as the construction and working of ranges and butts, explicit. In all, a very concise, complete *vade mecum*.



With Gordon at Khartum. By Elija F. Pollard. (Blackie and Son, 2*s*. 6*d*.) Harold Anderson while at Oxford becomes acquainted with Prince Hasan, a member of the Egyptian royal family. On the prince's invitation Anderson goes to Egypt and becomes a confidential adviser of the Khedive. The rebellion which resulted in the death of Gordon follows, and the hero goes through divers adventures. We can recommend the book as a suitable Christmas present for our younger readers.

NATURALISTS' CORNER.

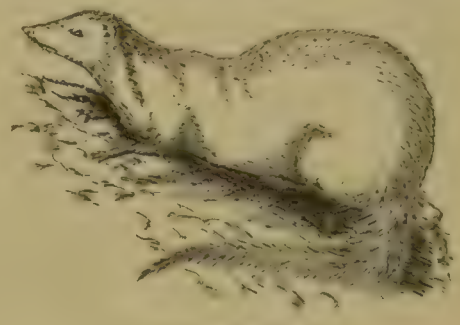
Conducted by EDWARD STEP, F.L.S.

Hints for a Collection.—F. Long (Abingdon) is to exhibit at a Nature Study Exhibition, and asks for hints as to a branch of Natural History in which he may make a local collection. The choice is very wide, but that probably is where the difficulty arises. For such an occasion, where the collection has to be made in a short space of time, it is advisable not to range over a big subject, but to select one with smaller limits, or a well-defined branch of a big subject. For example, botany as a whole, or even the flowering plants, is too big, but my correspondent might take a distinctive bit and do that well. There are the native and naturalised trees: a collection of their flowers, fruits, leaves and twigs could be accomplished with tolerable completeness in one season, and samples of bark and small sections of the timber could be added if he thought fit. There are the local beetles, land and freshwater snails, grasshoppers, dragonflies, bees and wasps, ferns, grasses, mosses, lichens, and so on. Of any of these, one could get together a very interesting collection in one season, even though one could not make it locally complete.

Seed-vessel.—Ernest Johnson (Peckham) sends the pod of a large-leaved plant he found up the cliffs near Beachy Head. Unfortunately, he says, the flowers were all over, so he could not send me one for identification. He asks, (1) its name, and (2) whether the seeds would grow in an ordinary garden? In this case it is not necessary for me to see the flower, as with the particulars he gives of locality, &c., there is no chance of a mistake. The seed-vessel (9½ in. long) is that of the Horned Poppy (*Glaucium flavum*), a very conspicuous ornament on many parts of the coast in summer and autumn, when its large golden flowers are out. I have never grown it as a garden flower, but as it is not very particular as to soil, I do not suppose there would be any difficulty whatever. E. J. should sow the seeds out of doors in April, and thin out, allowing plenty of room between the plants. I daresay he will find the leaves come less leathery than those he saw at Eastbourne, as it is the habit of most plants that grow on the coast to thicken their leaves. It should make a fine garden plant. It blooms from June to October.

Query as to Caterpillar, &c.—E. Dingwall (Weston-super-Mare). I regret that I am unable to identify your caterpillar from the description. The best way to keep chrysalids through the winter is in a fern-case. Cover the bottom with a couple of inches of mould which has previously been baked for a short time to destroy any insect or other germs which might be hurtful to your pupæ. Keep the earth slightly moist. Lay the pupæ on it and cover lightly with loose long moss. There is no small or inexpensive work on larvæ. The cheapest I know of is Owen Wilson's "Larvæ of the British Lepidoptera and their Food Plants," published at £3 3*s*. The standard work on the subject is Buckler's "Larvæ of the British Butterflies and Moths," in 4 vols. (Ray Society, £4 4*s*.).

Mongoose.—P. B. (Uppingham) is going to keep a mongoose, and wishes to know what would be a suitable place in a country house in which to keep it; what to feed it on besides raw meat, which is not always obtainable; and whether it must be kept warm? P. B. is in for



INDIAN MONGOOSE.

a very good time, and it is probable that there will be a mongoose for sale at an alarming

sacrifice in his neighbourhood before long. The mongoose is by nature a very ferocious little beast, but kindness and good treatment will make it perfectly tame. Nothing, however, will turn a healthy specimen into a quiet and indolent one. If allowed liberty, it will be all over the place, and P. B. will never know for two minutes where it is. Crockery and knick-knacks will all go to ruin, swept off the shelves in its exploring leaps. Liberty is out of the question. A mongoose must be kept in a *strong* cage, in a warm apartment, and it should be exercised only under control. It will eat cooked meat as well as raw. Milk also should be given; and P. B. might try it with some of Spratt's meat biscuits. A mongoose is a splendid ratter, but must be kept clear of the poultry-run. Let us know of your experiences by-and-by, P. B.

Birds' Eggs.—A. Macmillan (Hammersmith) sends me a long list of birds of which he has eggs, and wishes to know what the collection is worth. One of them—a ring-dove's—he was told was "pretty valuable." Possibly his informant could have valued the lot; but it is perhaps as well that he didn't. I do not like commercialism to enter into this Corner, so I cannot price A. M.'s collection for him. Furthermore, one cannot correctly estimate the value of a collection one has never seen—so much depends upon the knowledge and skill of the collector, and the plan upon which the collection was made—whether the "clutch" method or the single egg. I can, however, go so far as to say that any dealer would supply a ring-dove's egg for about twopence!

Tennis Lawn.—Tennis lawns have only a remote connection with natural history, but R. H. McCarthy (Listowel) writes to the O. F. on the subject, and the letter is sent to me to deal with. R. H. M. says his lawn is at present full of coarse grass and weeds, and he wishes to know how to turn it into a tennis and croquet lawn. For this purpose fine close grass is needed, and the coarse clumps must be cut out and the holes filled with well-fitting pieces of new turf, whilst every weed must also be extracted. If the condition of the existing lawn is such as to render this a matter of too great labour without promising good results, the alternative is to have the old lawn up, and relay with fine turf. This is work that can be satisfactorily carried out only by men of experience. I should advise my correspondent to call in the aid of an experienced gardener and ask him for an estimate of the cost, including the provision of turf. Digging up, levelling and topping with fresh soil upon which lawn-seed may be sown would be a cheaper method, but it would be a couple of years before the lawn could be used. In this case, R. H. M. should be sure and obtain lawn-seed that is above suspicion, or the last condition of the lawn may be worse than the first. Firms like Sutton of Reading make a special feature of lawn-seed, and any obtained from them for the purpose will be guaranteed free from the seeds of weeds.

Holly Fern.—B. Aked (Wimbledon) sends me part of a fern-frond, from a plant which he found in Devonshire. He believes it to be the Holly Fern, but a friend suggests doubt and he sends it to me as referee. I am sorry to have to decide against B. A., for the occurrence of the Holly Fern (*Aspidium lonchitis*) wild in Devonshire would be an interesting record. That sent is the Prickly Shield Fern (*Aspidium aculeatum*), which is plentiful in Devon as in many other parts. The Holly Fern is a distinctly northern species which comes no farther south than Yorks and North Wales (Snowdon range). Even about Snowdon you have to climb very high, in awkward places, and hunt considerably before you are rewarded by a sight of it. We give a drawing of a frond, which will enable B. A. to see the difference far better than a description would do.

HOLLY FERN.

Rabbits.—Violet D. la Touche (Craven Arms) asks several questions on rabbit-keeping, all except one coming under the head of commerce, with which I cannot deal. Pet-keeping for profit is a contradiction in terms. Respecting the first query: the two branches of the same stock can be paired, of course, but it is not advisable, as such a proceeding results in the production of a less vigorous race, and if Miss D. la Touche has ideas of making her rabbits pay, this should be an important point. It would be better for her to exchange with a fellow rabbit-keeper, when both will get a fresh strain.

Amateur Theatricals.

SOME HINTS TO BEGINNERS.

By E. C. HUDSON.

A PICTURESQUE WOODLAND SCENE.

WHAT a fascination there is in acting! The craze seems born in us. As children we delight in playing at schools, dressing-up as soldiers, or pretending to be Red Indians. Perhaps this instinct accounts for the number of humbugs in the world. Again, we hear and read about thrilling scenes with delight. With how much more pleasure do we witness a realistic representation of them!

THE USES OF AMATEUR THEATRICALS are many. Foremost is the amusement gained thereby. The pleasant evenings thus spent are not few in number. After the hard work done in learning and rehearsing (work which prevents idleness and so indirectly is of the greatest value) we come to the night of the performance. What excitement! What expectation! The applause which greets your rendering of a difficult passage sends a thrill of pleasure through you and amply repays you for those hours spent in practising before the looking-glass. A theatrical performance will be always welcome—at a family gathering, a party, or a concert; that is, of course, provided it is moderately well done. The actor benefits himself at the same time. He learns to speak well and to say his words clearly and distinctly. Nervousness, to which so many are prone, quickly begins to vanish. (Stepping from behind the scenes into the full gaze of a crowded hall is enough to make more than the mere novice lose his head.) Another advantage is the insight into life that one gets. In theatricals every class of men and every variety of scene is represented, and this necessitates keen observation on the part of the actor.

FORMING A COMPANY.

It will probably not be found a difficult matter to form a company. When two or three have talked the matter over and have asked a few friends to join them, a meeting should be called to draw up rules (if needed) and to elect officers: a manager to preside at rehearsals, perform the secretarial duties and act as prompter on the night; and a committee to choose the play and allocate parts. The duties of a manager are numerous and difficult. Consequently the best man available should be chosen for the post. The company must see that there can be one, and only one, manager, and his orders ought, therefore, to be cheerfully obeyed. The size of the company will vary, of course, according to circumstances, but it should be borne in mind that a large number of actors is apt to cause confusion.

CHOOSING A PLAY.

For amateurs this is an important point and is worth careful consideration. It is no use choosing plays which require balconies, bathing-machines, &c. The play should be one in which the scenery is pretty well the same throughout and is confined to a drawing-room or other easily arranged scene. It should also be chosen, as far as possible, to suit the players.

LEARNING PARTS.

Learning parts is generally one of the drawbacks to acting, and there are some individuals who will *not* do the necessary work. The manager should insist on the words being known before a rehearsal takes place. It is almost useless having a rehearsal unless *all* the parts are known. And, by "known" I do not mean the possession of a vague idea of

A COTTAGE INTERIOR.

what the play is about, but a thorough knowledge of the parts. I would say to the beginner, learn the *exact* words, for you cannot improve much on what is written down. Moreover, you are liable to leave out, or spoil, a good joke. The best way to learn your part is first to read it through several times, thus getting a good grip of it, and then learn it off by heart. Don't try to learn your part just after a heavy dinner or when you feel sleepy; but take your book of words with you to a quiet seat in the garden, your bedroom, or some other secluded spot, where you can fix your *whole* attention on what you are doing.

Rehearsing.

This item deserves more attention than it usually gets, as many performances are quite spoilt through insufficient rehearsal. On no account omit to have at least one dress rehearsal. The time for a rehearsal, once announced, should not be altered on any consideration, and it is a good plan to levy small fines for unpunctuality. Also, private conversation is undesirable whilst rehearsals are proceeding.

Scenery.

The amount of this depends almost entirely on the means at the disposal of the company. If the performance is to be on a fairly large scale it would be best to hire the scenery: but in the majority of cases a curtain at the back of the stage, a screen, table and two or three chairs, will be found sufficient. It is wonderful what can be done in this direction by the exercise of a little ingenuity

Costumes.

Good costumes go a long way towards making the performance a success, so that this item well repays a little care. Here again the handy man will be found invaluable. Much amusement can be obtained from preparing the costumes, especially if each performer has to make his own! In most plays information is given as to the costumes: if not, common sense and observation will make up for the defect.

Making-up.

Making-up also repays care, but the chief fault with amateurs is that they overdo it. The following directions will probably be found sufficient: Rouge should be applied, in moderation, to the chin, cheeks, and forehead. The position of wrinkles can be marked by frowning up or down, and then using a soft black-lead pencil along the lines indicated. Thin black lines should be drawn from the outward corners of the eyes to represent "crow's-feet": downward for comic, upward for serious characters. A few black lines should be drawn from the inward corners of the eyes to increase apparent age. An appearance of greyness can be given by sprinkling the hair with white powder. An unshaven appearance is represented by applying to the chin blue or black-grease paint. To prepare whiskers, &c., comb out the required amount of hair, roll

A DRAWING-ROOM SCENE.

between the hands and fix to face: then trim and twirl into shape. To fix hair, put on a little spirit gum with a brush and then press the hair on the face with a clean towel. Vaseline, well rubbed in, will help to remove the gum afterwards. Sticks of grease-paint are prepared for use by gently warming them. The following make-up apparatus will suffice in most cases: Rouge, hair (brown), spirit-gum, camel-hair brush, grease-paint (black), powder and powder-puff.

Acting.

A very sound rule is to imagine you *are* the person whose part you are acting. Act naturally and deliberately. Save occasionally in low comedy parts, exaggeration is never advisable. (There is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous.) To ensure acting naturally, first get a clear notion of what the words are meant to convey, and then say over your part with the proper action in front of a looking-glass: you will then be able to see for yourself whether you are acting it naturally. Nothing looks worse than strained or unnatural actions, such as needlessly rolling the eyes or attempting to copy well-known actors. Say the words distinctly, unaffectedly, and slowly. Remember that it takes time for the words to travel to the far end of a hall. The golden rule in declaiming is:

> Learn to speak slowly; all other graces
> Will follow in their proper places.

When saying your words, stand firmly on both legs, with one foot slightly in front of the other. Don't cross your legs or sway to and fro with a see-saw motion. Don't stare about you, and don't look on the ground. Keep your head well up and look just above the "nodding plumes" of the audience. When not speaking, appear to take an interest in what is going on in the play and act accordingly. Should you be merely a "super," carry on by-play with the other "stage ornaments."

The Performance.

Have everything laid out in readiness in your dressing-room, and provide yourself with a brush and comb and a spare handkerchief. A glass of water or lemonade should be at hand to moisten your lips with between your exits and entrances. It will be found a good plan to arrange with the prompter that you will give a slight cough if you need his help. It is customary to greet the appearance of a favourite actor with a round of applause, but this applause should not be acknowledged, though it should be necessary to wait for silence before commencing to speak. Finally, don't worry the stage-manager during the performance. His is one of the hardest "parts" of the lot to play, because he is "on" (though he is invisible) all the time.

For the illustrations to this article we are indebted to Messrs. Samuel French, Ltd., 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C., who supply scenery, make-up boxes, "properties," and everything that is required for amateur theatricals.

AN EFFECTIVE GARDEN SCENE.

A PUBLIC SCHOOL STORY.

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell.

SYNOPSIS.

Dick Erpingham, an athletic, good-looking fellow, comes rather mysteriously to Harford, a big public school, at the age of eighteen. He has the cut of a public school man, but will not vouchsafe any information as to his antecedents. By saving a fag, Bob Leaf, from drowning, Erpingham makes the acquaintance of the teller of the story, Firmin, a cripple, and the two become great friends. Harford's idol and celebrity is Jim Mordaunt, a brilliant bat and wicket-keeper who has been played for his county. Dr. Forder, the Head Master, suspects Mordaunt of having attended a race-meeting, and as Erpingham (who had been up to London for an examination) was a passenger in the train by which Mordaunt must have returned, the Head asks him whether he saw Mordaunt in the train. This after Mordaunt had denied having been to the races. After a momentary hesitation Erpingham admits that he saw Mordaunt in the race-train. Mordaunt then confesses that he did attend the races, and it is feared that he will be expelled, but that night Erpingham has an interview with the Head Master, and on the morrow Mordaunt, to the unbounded relief of the school, is merely deprived of his monitorship. Erpingham, for his share in the matter, is "cut" by everybody in the school except Firmin and Bob Leaf. By the instrumentality of a charming girl named Yolande Yorke, who lives near the school, Bob Leaf learns that Erpingham was previously at Stonehurst, a public school of the same standing as Harford. Firmin and the fag of course keep this knowledge to themselves. A fellow who displays the bitterest hostility towards Erpingham is Kent, one of the school's "undesirables," and a close friend of Jim Mordaunt's. On the last day of the term, Firmin comes upon Kent trying to force Bob Leaf into giving him some information about Erpingham's previous career. Escaping from Kent's clutches, Bob, though fully dressed, jumps into the Pool, the school bathing-place. Kent follows, but as he is scrambling up the opposite bank after Leaf, Firmin drives him back into the water by striking him fiercely with his crutch.

CHAPTER XV.

DICK MEETS YOLANDE.

He came back to Harford when October was well within hail. Wren had gone, good old Wren, and Milligan, Harbour's great man, a fellow who was just Forder's sort and might have been the old captain's brother, was gazetted in his stead. No one grudged Milligan the honour in all Harford. Dick came up to the old place by the evening express, when the cabs were at a premium, and when he saw me on the platform, looking out for him, he sprang out and shook my hand with a grip that made my eyes water. He was bronzed through and through, which

told me tales of Westmorland fells, the hills, and those tarns and lakes which he had flashed before my eyes as though they would tempt me north, if his own hospitality could not, two months before.

"How are you, Frank?"

"Never better, but I'm not going to ask you anything so absurd. You look brutally healthy."

"I feel fit; had a glorious time, Frank."

I was glad to hear the ring in his voice. I saw in a moment something of a newer, happier Dick, something of what I had always fancied the real Erpingham—the Erpingham of pre-Harfordian days—to be. There was a buoyancy, and a lightness, present now that had only come up to the surface in fitful flashes before.

"Shall I hail you a cab, Dick?" I asked, as he moved towards the van where the porters were throwing out trunks, as Leaf remarked afterwards, regardless of "perishable" and "fragile."

"Not for me, Frank. Let's walk, please. I've had enough of carriages for one day."

"All serene. Here's Bob and Anson; they'll see it carted up to Crosse's."

"Hullo, Bob! How are you, Arthur?"

Leaf and Anson gripped my friend's hand as though they really were pleased to see him.

"Will you, Bob? Think you can manage the whole menagerie? Have two cabs, then."

"Certainly, sir," said Bob, touching his hat. "See them up to your house, sir, quite safe. My mate Arty is perfectly honest."

"More'n I can say of 'im," chirruped Arthur. "But I'll keep my eye on 'im, sir." Arthur had shed all—every scrap—of the callow Harfordian. Another "ship that had found herself." Such is the effect of a dozen weeks at a public school, where you rub shoulders with other young bloods and get kicked if you're too cheeky.

"Thanks," said Dick. "Come on, Frank."

At Crosse's, our devoirs paid to the house master, we chatted on many things, Germany mixed with Westmorland. "I say, Dick," said I, in mock anxiety, "you've been slacking abominably over the Arts—that tan hasn't got one good word to say about a steady four hours' grind."

Dick laughed. "Don't worry, old man, the Arts work has been done all right. And look at me a moment, you nigger driver. Ever heard of the Brownjohn?"

"Well?" said I, pricking up my ears. "One hundred and ten for three years at Oriel."

"That's the Brownjohn Exhibition—quite correct. And the standard is just about the Arts. And it comes two months earlier. Let's have a shot at it, you and I. The pater is keen on my trying, but I said I wasn't, unless you fancied it."

I thanked Erpingham pretty warmly. "I'll sleep on it, old man; but why don't you take it *solus?*"

"Not I," said Dick. "With you, or not at all. Don't you see, Frank, if we worked up and wound up for the Brownjohn it would be a sort of preliminary canter for the Arts. The pater is keen on it, but reasonably keen, mind. He's horribly keen, though, over the Arts."

"The Brownjohn would give us a lead for the Arts," said I, considering. "There's no doubt about that."

"The pater's point. There'll be loads in for it, of course."

"Not too many," said I, running over our seniors. "Do you know who could lift the exhibition and give both of us a start and a terrific hiding, Dick?"

"Mordaunt. Seen him?"

"Just as I ran across you. He was with Bill Kent. I suppose it's going to be as before."

"All the others back?"

"Bar Bolton, who has gone to Cooper's Hill. Indian Forests."

"Jim speak, Frank?" asked Dick, rather gravely.

"Nothing especial," said I. Jim had given me a cool nod as we passed, but Bill Kent had rolled up heavily. "Hullo! Toothpick. Look positively re-coppered."

"Can't spot any change in you, Kent," said I, curtly, not seeing his large hand stretched out to me.

"Just the same old Bill, Toothpick. Kind and affable to all his pals. Come back ready for anything—pitch and toss to manslaughter," said Kent sweetly, not in the very least rebuffed at his untaken hand. I am sure he was more amused than otherwise. "Waiting for the Ineffable, Toothpick?"

"How's the arm, Kent?" said I, acidly.

"First-rate cure, thanks," said Bill, without turning a hair. "I'd almost forgotten it."

"I hadn't," said I.

"Jolly good of you to call on the last night, Firmin. Sorry that I was out, but Jim did the honours just as well, I fancy. Yes, it's all right now, Frankie,"—and he pulled up his sleeve and showed me a brawny wrist. "Probably go in for the heavies in March—if I'm not kicked out before."

"That's improbable," said I, with a decent copy of his own sneer.

"Oh! rather. I'm going to do some good work before I go."

"Better go now, and get it over," said I, as I turned away.

I said nothing of all this to Dick, and we chattered on until it was time for bed. On the morrow Dick and I went into Forder's Sixth together, and Erpingham took Bolton's old desk next mine. The Sixth greeted me with their usual smiles, and I was curious to see what they would make of my friend. They treated him as before—as an institution with which they had no concern. Only Milligan, who sat alongside, murmured: "You look pretty fit, Erpingham. Had a decent holiday?"

I rather fancy Wren, who was Milligan's friend, must have said something to his chum. Dick turned to the new captain with a pleasant smile and said a few civil words, and then Forder came in and locked his legion into work with a grim "Good morning." Milligan was the right sort for captain—thought I.

While we were at breakfast, Dick said: "By the way, Frank, you know the Yorkes, don't you?"

"Oh! rather—all except the father, I think, and that reminds me, Dick. I had an invitation for you. I was to take you up to Whitegates, there to make the acquaintance of the inimitable Yolande, her mater, and her cousin Agnes, who, apparently, lives there. I forgot to tell you. I suppose stress of packing up, &c."

"You didn't do any packing up, you lazy sinner. It must have been the etcetera."

Since the etcetera was the Pool incident, Dick was pretty near the mark. He went on:

"Well, it seems my cousin Maud knows them, and I had a note from Mrs. Yorke asking me to call. Mentioned she knew you, of course, but I won't show you the vile libel she perpetrated on your moral character. Shall we go up—and get it over? The women are so beastly kind. Fancy I'm lonely—and sort of pining for home comforts."

"Let's," said I, "after dinner."

So, after dinner, we went up river. The Hare swirled along between its banks, as full as ever, but the woods and copses fringing its moving waters were touched with autumn's gold, and the leaves came off in little dry showers as the late September breezes rattled their boughs. The river's breast was flecked with them. We pushed in at the boat-house, and found another school skiff already tied up. "I'll wager, Dick, we'll meet Leaf and Co.—certainly Bob paying an afternoon call."

"Of course," said Dick. "Bob was mentioned, too."

We did not reach the house before we heard a joyous hail over the box hedge—a hail which I recognised well enough.

"It's Frank, mother," said Yolande. "Down, Jack, you stupid. Don't you know your friends?"

Yolande opened the wicket gate in the high box hedge and brought us in, upon the tennis lawn, where a racket was thrown carelessly down and idle balls littered the green, just as I guessed she had left 'em when Bob and Co. came up the field. For Bob was there, and so were Anson and King, and Mrs. Yorke and Agnes. Yolande had grown, or her frock had been altered, and her hair was caught up in a ribbon which was not in my memory. But nothing else was changed. There was the honest ring in her voice, the honest look in her eyes, the honest grasp of the hand, as of old. Mrs. Yorke took Dick and me beside her and we chatted on, Yolande and the rest cutting in when there was a quarter of a chance. Dick fenced with his three new friends as he had fenced with Kate and the mater, lightly and pleasantly; made them laugh and brought a smile from Agnes, which Yolande told me only King could do.

We stayed till the last moment, and then we Harfordians made a move to the boat-house. Yolande caught my arm as we went down the field.

"Frank, you were right," she whispered, hurriedly. "Dick Erpingham never did anything mean. I like him. Come again soon, won't you?"

So down the river we went, and Dick's comment was: "I like your friend Yolande, Frank. They seem jolly people."

"Of course," said I.

And though we did not know it then, Dick's acquaintance with the Yorkes of Whitegates was destined to have a strange effect on his school's history.

CHAPTER XVI.

HARFORD'S "GUY."

THINGS settled down at Harford with the autumn's leaves, and almost before we were aware of it, September slipped into October and October stormed into November. Football was in full swing; the boats were off the river, save an old well punt or two; fires blazed in studies; fellows came in at tea-time, off Footer Meads, hot, muddy, and thirsty; junior Crosse's reeked of embrocation; and

those fellows who had found it difficult to work in the summer when the sun was shining, put in what grinding they ever did. Dick and I read together as usual, for the Brownjohn and for the Arts, but our river trips were over. I, muffled up to the chin, fished on the bleak waters of the Hare; but Dick, after one unlucky trial, confessed he preferred trouting and summer time to roach and drizzle. Standing about on Footer Meads in the damp did not agree with me, and so, just as good chums can do without a strain on their friendship, Dick tailed off on half holidays to watch the footer, and I went after roach or jack. Over our fire after tea Dick was informed as to the Hare's behaviour towards my patient angle, and I heard just what a centre forward Jim Mordaunt was, just what a solid steady back, safe as a house, Milligan was, and how Bill Kent in goal took rasping shots as if he loved 'em.

Milligan, as captain, came to ask Dick if he'd play, but Dick thanked him warmly and said he couldn't. Then one night he came in in a hurry: Would Dick referee Harbour's *v.* Asquith's (juniors)? *He* had promised, but couldn't very well cut out of the XI.

"Where do the kids disport? I'll take them," said Erpingham.

"Thanks, Erpingham," said the captain, chucking Dick a whistle. "Far pitch . . . far from the madding crowd," and was gone again.

Harbour's juniors and Asquith's stared when Erpingham sauntered towards them; but when he asked young Bottle if all the warriors had arrived, that young gentleman could only gasp: "Are you ref., Erpingham? Milligan said *he* was coming down."

"He can't," said Dick. "Won't I do?"

Bottle didn't seem to think that Dick would do. Harbour's felt that to let a man at Coventry superintend their game was treason to the school. Asquith's sniffed superiorly when the anxious Bottle consulted them. "You provide the ref., Bottle. If you can't get any one with a better record than Erpingham, that's your look-out. We'll do better, though, when it's our turn," said Bland, Asquith's centre.

Arthur Anson heard all this with blazing eyes. "Look here, Bottle, if you show Erpingham you don't want him by so much as a look, I'll come out of the XI., I'll black both your eyes, and you can do your essays and your Ovid all on your own for ever. If he's good enough for the captain, you little pig, isn't he good enough for us?"

"I don't mind, Anson, personally," said Bottle hurriedly. "Don't get in such a wax."

"Aren't you captain, you idiot?" said Arthur, fingering Bottle's overcoat-top-button with grim intent. "Go and tell him you're—we're—horribly pleased."

And as Dick related afterwards, with a grin of delight, Bottle said to him: "Erpingham, we're horribly pleased you're ref. Thanks awfully."

After all this, it was rather hard on Harbour's and Arthur for Dick to disallow Anson's goal, which would have won the match. Asquith's went off the field swearing Erpingham knew the game, though he was undoubtedly a beast.

Then, somehow, to my huge delight, Dick went off every half-holiday down to Meads in footer togs, with a whistle in his breast pocket. He was loath to cut fagging for the exams., but half-holidays in winter are only like an hour's stroll after dinner in summer in point of time, as I pointed out. He came back flushed with the exercise—official referee to Harbour's house, who, led on by Bottle—urged on by Anson—really did seem "horribly pleased" to see him, now. For Dick had become, insensibly, their coach. He showed Anson and Co. how to shoot, showed Bottle just how to take the ball along to his forwards, and young Gold was cured in three matches of his ballooning skyrockets at back. Bob Leaf, taken down with careful carelessness by Arthur to Harbour's pitch to have a look at Erpingham at work, came back primed with almost Ciceronian eloquence.

"Firmin, 'pon honour, there's not a fellow, not Jim himself, can touch Dick when he's got the ball. You might think he'd got it tied to his boot lace. And doesn't it zip when he drives. He just looks where Pocklington isn't, and you see the ball in the rigging, or it goes skid-skidding through the mud like one of Kortright's shooters. And mind, he's got the curb on all the time, for Pocklington isn't exactly Bill Kent under the bar. He's not showing off, not an atom—just showing Harbour's kids what footer can be. There was old Harbour down there this afternoon with Milligan, and they were staring. I'll bet you'll have Milly here after tea on important business. Think we'll see Dick in Harford's XI., Frank?" asked Bob, with an indescribable leer.

"No, I don't," said I.

Sure enough, after tea Milligan called as Dick was coming in with his books. "I say, Erpingham, I badly want you to play against the Town to-morrow. Will you?"

"I'd like to, Milligan, but I can't—really."

The captain, as a good captain should, wasn't for taking Dick at his word, but I managed to catch his eye. Milligan took the hint,

and successfully corked down his arguments. "Well, Erpingham, if you can't do that, I must jolly well say Harford's the loser. I think it pretty good of you to take Harbour's youngsters in hand. They're quite decent."

I went with the captain to Crosse's door. "Erpingham won't play, Milligan—some promise, and besides, you'd lose half your XI. if you brought him in."

"You mean Gleam? I believe old Wren was right, you know, and Erpingham didn't have fair play over that. I'd talk the fellows round."

"Not you," said I, with a bitter smile.

"I'd try," he said, rather feebly.

"It's no good, believe me. Can he play?"

"Play!" said the captain, with a whistle of admiration. "Put him alongside Jim, and there'd be no holding them. He's got pure footer at the end of his toes. But, if it's no good—" and the captain went off in a chastened mood.

"THIS IS MY FUNERAL," HE SAID.

Tempted by a fine, bright day, I went down to Meads one Saturday—a memorable Saturday—to watch the school against the *Old Westminsters*. Dick was on Harbour's acres refereeing, but we were to foregather when the game was over and walk back to Crosse's, when Dick was to change into civilian dress, and with Forder's special *exeat* spend the week-end at Whitegates. His cousin Maud was there. I watched our fellows until the whistle went and then moved off towards Harbour's. Dick's bands were hard at work still. When he finally stopped his youthful warriors and joined me I was rather surprised to find that the fellows, instead of streaming off Meads as usual, were making for that secluded corner just by the low fence which separated Footer Meads from the cricket field. The bulk of the school pavilion shut in this little angle.

"What is it?" I asked one of the fellows hurrying past.

"Come and see, Toothpick. No end funny."

"Let's," said I, and Dick and I followed at the tail of the crowd.

An old hay wain had been drawn into the corner. It was heaped up with wood piles, and perched on the top of all was a chair. In the chair was tied a nodding, imbecile figure.

"Of course," said I, as I caught sight of this, "it's the Fifth."

"Dick nodded. "A guy—but it isn't Krüger this time."

The crowd made way for us with curious alacrity, and we found ourselves in the front. The wood was beginning to flame already. Something, a sort of far-away resemblance to somebody in that staring imbecile puppet's face, struck me. I turned to Dick. He had stiffened, his shoulders were square set, and his lips were drawn thin and fast. He looked like Forder.

"This is my funeral," he said, in bitter scorn.

"Let's away, Dick," I said, almost choking.

His hand closed on my arm with a fierce grip. "Not a bit of it, Frank. I'm staying. Do I look quite such a fool as that gentleman aloft? And what's the legend on his chest? 'Our Distinguished Visitor.'"

Harfordian youth yelled with delight as the flames soared up in the November dusk. The row was almost Lord's-like. When the roaring fire caught the chair, a jeering laugh—a cruel laugh of mockery—burst from the school. Some seniors walked back quietly the way they had come. I saw Milligan and Jim and Gale and three or four others go.

"Come away," I urged again.

"Not I," said Erpingham, fiercely. "This is my funeral. I'm going to be in at my death. You go, Frank."

I stayed, of course, but I looked round fiercely for Kent. I could not see him. This was his work, of a surety. I felt this as certainly as though I'd seen him fashioning that grinning mask above. The flames were almost as high as the polled limes by now; the burning floor of the old wain began to let through some of the glowing mass above it, the bright tongues were licking around Erpingham's horrible effigy. It began to quiver and lurch as though it were sick; then, as the heat penetrated to the powder in its internal anatomy, it jumped hysterically a yard into the air, and came tumbling down headlong to our feet, amid the derisive howls of six hundred throats. A shower of sparks soared above the tree tops, and a light breeze sent them sailing out over the cricket field.

A fellow out of Ashford's house, Ellis, an overgrown, heavy lout, caught hold of a stake, and pinning the flaming guy through its torn chest, marched with it, as with a standard, towards the pond, out of whose thick muddy waters I have got my six tench per annum. The Harfordians followed, whistling the Dead March as though they had been coached for the part.

"Come along, Frank," said Dick, dragging me after him. "I must see where my ashes are to lie."

Arrived, Ellis slung the burning figure far out into the pond, and there it lay mournfully sizzling and smoking.

"Cheers for Our Distinguished Visitor," called out Ellis, and the Harfordians groaned soulfully.

Then came a curious little lull broken by a fresh young voice: "Who does all the dirty work? E-l-l-is! Three cheers for Dick Erpingham!"

A quaver of voices followed Anson's call—Harbour's lights, I should fancy. Ellis turned round truculently: "Duck that little beggar!" Ashford's beauty strode up to Arthur and gripped him by the overcoat collar, and, although Arthur struck out valiantly, a great raw hand jerked him to the pond edge. I don't know that I particularly wanted to stop him, but Erpingham threw off my restraining hand savagely, and had thrust for himself a way to Ellis before I had the time, even if the inclination had been there.

"Drop the lad," said Dick, gripping Ellis's right arm.

Ellis faced round in astonished anger, still clutching Anson. "Oh! you! You can go and fish him out," he said.

Erpingham's hand tightened on the lout's arm. "Drop him," he said again, very quietly.

Ellis did drop him, with something like a cry of pain. The next moment the mob of Harfordians saw him swing his left arm round and strike Dick full in the mouth.

The same expression of ungovernable anger flooded Erpingham's face as I had seen on that memorable night when Mordaunt had come into Dick's study. I, and the whole breathless school, expected to see Ellis felled to the ground. For two seconds his fate hung in the balance; then, with a sudden jerk, Erpingham lifted him bodily up and heaved him neck and crop into the pond.

The fellow came up panting and made for the bank. Dick waited for him in sombre fury. I noticed his lip was bleeding. But when Ellis scrambled up, his late cheerfulness was gone. He avoided Dick as though my friend were a leper, moved into the crowd, and cut. If ever a fellow were scared it was Ellis.

I took Dick's arm and said: "Come along, old man. I don't think there's any more;" and together we went off, silent as mutes, leaving Harfordians round the fire, which was leaping still. Dick went off to Whitegates within the hour.

I saw Kent as he came in; the smell of the

bonfire was on him still. I said: "Congratulations, Kent."

"Went off very well, didn't it? All bar that unrehearsed incident at the end. I'd nothing to do with that, and I'll kick Ellis when I see him for putting his clumsy paws in my affairs."

"Done Erpingham a lot of harm, hasn't it?"

"Not a bit," said Kent, cheerfully.

And Kent was quite right—when Dick tackled Ashford's beauty I saw on many faces unqualified approval. No wonder Kent was wroth.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FIRE BELL.

DECIDEDLY, Harford went to bed with chastened thoughts. Milligan came in after tea to find Dick and to assure him that he was horribly sorry, thinking, good man, that we needed immediate assurance that he knew nothing of the November project. I told him Dick had gone away. "You might tell Kent just what you feel," said I to the captain.

I could not get to sleep, try as I would. I heard the trains thundering along, and their whistles blaring across the quiet fields as they prepared to rush through Harford, north or south. I could hear the roar merge into a dreary drone and then die out into a murmur miles away. I went over again all that quarter of an hour spent behind the pavilion, minutes crammed with shame and anger, fear and pride. Then, coming like a ghost into my troubled thoughts, I heard the deep tones of a bell. It sounded a long way off, as though, far away, in the dark throat of the night some one was tolling heavily a message of woe. The bell, heavy, persistent, slow, went so aptly with my thoughts that I was just going to drop off to sleep when all at once I found myself asking a question. "What's the bell ringing for, anyhow?"

I got out of bed the next moment and flung up the window wide. The sound came nearer and clearer. Under the still November sky, powdered with stars, it tingled and filled the air. There was no mistaking what it was now. A fire bell was ringing somewhere up river, over at Whitegates I thought. I looked out, expecting to see the glow of some burning ricks, but I could see nothing—nothing at first. Then my eyes caught a little wave of brightness—a sudden splash of light—on the black face of the fields in front of me. I kept my eyes riveted there. Once again there glowed a reddish orange light, and, though this might have been fancy, in the quick flare I saw rolling wisps of smoke. It was in Meads, and, yes—another leaping spurt of light I saw the mass of the pavilion—the pavilion was on fire!

I went as I was into Jim's room, and as I switched on the light he turned on his pillow. I took him by the shoulder and said: "Jim, the pavilion is on fire. The bell's been going for five minutes; you'd better dress."

"Tell the others, Frank," said Jim, awake in a moment. "Not the kids, though."

I went and roused up Crosse's seniors. I couldn't resist a bitter sneer when I had Bill Kent awake: "Another fire, Kent. Pavilion, this time."

"What!" said Kent. "No foolery."

"Listen," said I. "Can't you hear the bell?"

"Get the other chaps up, Toothpick," said Kent, clutching his clothes.

When I got out of Kent's, I saw Crosse. "The fire is at the pavilion, sir," said I to the half-dressed house-master. "I've roused the seniors."

"That's right, Firmin. We may be of some help."

Jim seized a couple of the leather fire buckets hanging at the end of our corridor. "Tell the others to do the same, Frank," he said hurriedly, and went down the steps four at a time and out into the street. One by one Crosse's seniors slipped out, each with a couple of empty buckets flapping at his sides.

I dressed and followed them. I pegged away as hard as I could, but when I got down to the pavilion there must have been fifty or more people there, Harfordians most of them. The flight of seats was ablaze, and as the flames steadily gained the upper hand it looked to be only a matter of time before the old landmark of Harfordian games—the pavilion round which so many happy memories clustered—was a blackened ruin. The flames were mounting higher, almost climbing up to the verandah's wooden roof, which, once touched by those curling tongues of fire, would burn like matchwood, and then water wouldn't save us. Our only hope was that Harford New Town's brigade, stationed two miles away, would get in in time. Two rows of willing hands passed up buckets of water from the tench pond, and at the head of the line two sturdy workers plied the fire with a steady, if puny, stream. Mordaunt was one.

Some one passed an arm through mine, and a voice said: "Oh! Frank, do you think we'll win?" I turned round in utter astonishment.

Yolande was looking up into my face; she was trembling with anxiety.

"Why, Yolande, what are you doing here?"

"I've been here ever so long," she said. "Dick and I found the fire."

"Dick!" said I, fairly gasping. "Where is Dick?"

"There—throwing the water. Mordaunt is the other one."

I looked, but I hardly recognised my friend. He was blackened with smoke: his face was like a negro's, his arms worked almost as regularly as a pump. A bucket was passed to him, a sliver of water flashed in the ruddy light, a hiss almost lost in the crackle of burning wood followed, the bucket was handed back and another full one clutched. And he stepped a little forward at every throw. I never admired my friend so much as then.

"Oh! he's brave, Frank, isn't he?" said Yolande.

I turned to the girl at my side. She was in some filmy white dress, and her hair was tied with a pretty ribbon. All at once I saw she was soaking wet. Water was dripping from her frock and her arms were glistening with moisture. "Why, you're wet, Yolande."

"That's nothing. I carried buckets and buckets—before any one came—Dick and I."

"Let me take you home," said I, hastily.

"I won't, Frank," she said, almost fiercely. "I won't go until Dick comes too." She removed her arm and positively glared at me.

Above the crackling of the flames, we heard a far off grinding of wheels, and a murmur rose up around us. "They're here. Get back." We saw the gleaming lights swerve sharply off the road and turn in at Meads' broad gates. The noise of the wheels was muffled as the grass was reached, and we heard only the thud of galloping horses and the jingle of their harness, as the engine rocketed towards us. The horses, their nostrils pits of fire, slewed round as they came abreast of the pavilion, scattering the gathering crowd right and left. The firemen jumped down. A few hoarse cries, the clear call of a whistle, and the engine began its thump, thump, thumping; a fireman raised the long gleaming brazen nozzle of the hose, stretching from the pond like a monstrous snake, and a jet of water leapt at the flames as the verandah broke out in sheets of fire. The brigade was in charge—just in time.

When the first fierce rush of water sprang forth, Dick dropped his bucket like a wearied man, and staggered back as though he were dizzy. Mordaunt sprang to his side and steadied him—he has told me since he did not know then who it was, but I think he would have done the same at that moment had he known. Yolande let go my arm again, and darted into the crowd. "Dick's hurt," she said, panting.

I followed her. Dick was in a little ring of people, and I hardly knew him. He was as black as a sweep, his face glistened with perspiration, his shirt was a limp, soaking dirty grey rag. There was nothing "immaculate" about Erpingham then.

"Are you hurt, Dick?"

"Hurt? rubbish," he said cheerily. "I'm pretty fagged though. Seen Yolande?"

"I'm here," said the girl, with a little quiver. I'm sure Yolande was as near crying then as she will ever let her friends see her be.

"WE DID AS MUCH AS WE COULD—DICK AND I."

"Frank, take Yolande home, there's a good fellow."

"I'm not going unless you——"

"Yolande," said Dick, sternly, "go home with Frank. You'll be ill if you stand about. Why, you're like a wet rag."

"And you, Dick?" I whispered.

"Well, I'm going to rest ten minutes, Frank. Feel 'all out. Get Yolande to bed."

"Come," said I to the girl.

"I'm ready, Frank," said Yolande, meekly. I'm certain she wouldn't have gone for me, but Dick "has a way with him" somehow.

"They're in time, Yolande," said I, encouragingly, as we watched the water holding the flames. The verandah roof was black and smoking already, and bit by bit the long flight of burning steps was being eaten into by the spouting water, and, instead of curling flames, blackened, smoking, streaming baulks showed their ugly jaws. "They'll have it out, Yolande, in ten minutes. Thanks to you and Dick."

We went off pretty sharply, the feverish thud, thud of the pumping engine sounding behind us; but as we nervously turned round every now and then we were cheered by seeing all gloomily black at Meads.

Yolande had recovered her spirits before we were out of the field, and she prattled on about her share of the evening's performance as though she had enjoyed it. "Dick and Maud, Agnes and I, got back from the theatre in town by the last train. We were to walk from the station home if it were fine—and it was a splendid night. When we got opposite Meads' gates I said to Dick: 'Somebody's left their fire burning in Meads, Dick. I thought only little boys had bonfires?' Dick said, rather funnily, 'Oh! we've had a ripping bonfire. Guy, too.' Did you see it, Frank?"

"Yes," said I, gloomily.

"Well, I told Dick I thought they ought to have put it out, and Agnes said it was dangerous, so near the pavilion. Dick said, as he looked across Meads, it seemed jolly funny to him, as the bonfire hadn't been in front of the pavilion at all. 'Well, there you are, Dick,' I said. 'It's glowing yet.'

"He said again it was very strange, and then all at once he asked us if we would come across Meads for five minutes. I saw he was thinking about something, so I said 'Yes' before Agnes could speak. We scampered across the field, and when we had come near enough Dick said: 'The pavilion is on fire. Is there a fire bell near here, Yolande?'

"'There's ours,' said Agnes, nearly fainting. 'Well, will you hurry to Whitegates and have it rung, for dear life? If the brigade turn out they're bound to see the fire is at the pavilion. It is awfully serious.' Agnes and Maud ran off like the wind, but I stayed with Dick. We found some leaky buckets that had been used to put out the bonfire, and both of us filled them at the pond, and Dick tried his hardest to keep the fire from under the verandah. Then we heard our bell tolling—Agnes and Maud must have run awfully fast. Dick kept the verandah swimming with water, but he was nearly choked with the smoke and roasted with the heat. We did as much as we could—back and forward from the pond to the fire, Dick with two buckets and I with one wretched holey thing. We hardly spoke a word, Frank. How many times we went I do not know, but I was drenched through every time, and Dick became like a sweep in five minutes. Then people began to come—and when Mordaunt came and others of the school, I dropped my bucket, without regret. Dick had the water passed up to him then—and the rest you saw. Isn't he a brave fellow, Frank? I should like to see some one braver than Erpingham."

"So should I, Yolande. But you are awfully plucky, you know."

"For a girl, of course," said Yolande. "How did the fire happen, do you think?"

"Kent's wretched bonfire," I said, angrily.

At Whitegates Yolande was snatched out of my hands by an anxious mother. When I got back to Meads the fire was out, but the engine was still pumping valiantly. Half an hour afterwards the Harfordians left the brigade rolling up its hose, and we filed off to our beds.

I did not see Erpingham again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ERPINGHAM'S NEWS.

THE school talked of little else than the fire all day Sunday. I was besieged in my sanctum as being probably the fellow who knew most about the matter, and I took care to drive home what I thought would do Harfordians the most good. I welcomed all and sundry, and when I had my den full I spoke as my spirit moved me. If I could only have had Kent on my hearth rug, I think I really could have done justice to the theme. But Bill kept his own quarters.

"You needn't rub it in quite so freely, Toothpick. There were some of us who didn't approve of the guy business," observed Gale.

"Ah! and walked away. That's what I

call a forcible protest. Probably tea was about ready. But just consider the irony—good word, irony—of it all. Your double-barrelled, straw man, or a spark from his cathedral, sets fire to the pavilion. What is the pavilion, anyhow? It's been up eighty years, it's crammed with memorials of Harfordians dead and gone, and in its way matters every whit as much as Old School or the chapel. The fellow you've been burning in effigy is the fellow who slugs away to put the fire out. Ironic—fine word, ironic. But the cream of the joke has to come. You've cut the fellow, you've treated him like a mangy dog for doing what every one of you would have done rather quicker if Forder had had you opposite him. But the last word hasn't been said yet, you know. Before Dick Erpingham leaves Harford you'll own you've been playing a rotten game all through. Bill Kent wags you at the end of his finger."

"No fear," said Gale. "Not Bill, nor Toothpick. We treat things on their merits."

"Do you!" I snapped. "Then treat this on its merits."

"We mean to," said Gale.

Dick came back from Whitegates for first school on Monday. He had miscalculated the distance from Thorne's, because Forder was within a minute or two of being due, and five minutes is our usual wait for the Head. The Sixth had glanced curiously at Erpingham's empty stall, and Milligan was leaning over asking me if Dick wasn't coming, when my friend hurried in. He gave a hasty glance at Forder's empty dais, and looked relieved when he found the Head had not arrived. Milligan led off, as a captain should, and Forder's arrival cut short the Sixth's applause. Mordaunt I watched like a hawk. Jim was on his trial for me, anyhow. He turned round towards Dick and joined in. A little flush of admiration showed in his face, and somehow I felt happier than I had done for many a day when I saw the colour in my old friend's cheek. Dick looked rather curiously around. Then he flushed, too, and turned nervously towards me. His hair was singed in front, there were suspicious spots of colour on his face, and his right hand was gloved. Forder, as I said, came in while the Sixth were cheering the outcast of two days ago. He looked round sharply, smiled kindly upon us all—Forder smiled kindly, I repeat—and glancing at Dick, gave him a grave little bow. Then he clutched his gown by the collar—a mannerism—and we were embarked on a day's work once more.

Over breakfast Dick and I chattered like magpies. His story was the same as Yolande's—only he glowed over the girl's pluck. "She worked like a horse—and never spoke. She fell into the pond in the dark, I found out afterwards, and never whimpered. Pluck—got as much as two of you, Bob."

Bob, who was having breakfast with us, said: "Rather, Erpingham," as though Dick had paid him a compliment.

"How is she?"

"All serene. We all came out to view the scene yesterday while you were at chapel. The mess is pretty complete, outside."

Forder, who never fusses unnecessarily, said a few acid words to us in Big School about the depraved tastes of public school boys who had not yet relegated bonfires to the limbo of the past, settled handsomely with the brigade, and told us bluntly that that and the new flights to the pavilion would come out of our pockets. I made a point of asking Kent if he'd mind paying my share. Bill was imperturbable.

"Bless you, yes, Toothpick," he said, with his large smile. "And you can have the advertisement, too. I've kicked Ellis—but I *won't* kiss Erpingham."

Things were out of the old rut now. Dick was no longer the complete outcast. The Sixth spoke to him as they might speak to any one whom they respected but with whom they were not particularly chummy; there was a sort of cloud over Dick still, but you could see things through it. It wasn't thick darkness. But, practically, the school's attitude of benevolent neutrality made no difference to Erpingham. We worked on steadily, "without haste, without rest;" Crosse dropped in more frequently as Christmas drew near, and Erpingham was now almost a seasoned worker, for study, like everything else, has to be learnt. I went on with my fishing. Yolande sometimes boarded my punt, and by and by she knew enough to do rare execution among the roach. I always think of Yolande, now, as I saw her many times on cold, grey winter afternoons, sitting close wrapped in her grey guard's coat, on the thwart of my old green punt, her brown hair blown across her face, her rod across her knees, her eye on the quill trembling on the moving waters, and her left arm half encircling Jack, who, with one paw raised, seemed to have a hazy idea that there were rats in the business. Dick was still guide, philosopher, and friend to Harbour's crowd of juniors, who were going great guns in their footer orbit—I am afraid this is mixed metaphor—and Bob Leaf was never tired of telling Crosse's lot what double-barrelled idiots

they were to have let slip such a coach, whom they could have had for the asking once.

"How did we know the fellows would ever speak to Erpingham. Leaf?" demanded Harris, who took the line for Crosse's lot.

"I've told you often enough," snorted Bob.

"Ah!" said King, slyly. "Bob will sneak Erpingham from that cocky Harbour crowd, won't you, Bob?"

"No fear," said Leaf, hotly. You go and speak to Bill Kent—the fellow who tried to burn down the old pav. He's been your man long enough."

"Well, Kent and Mordaunt are thick enough yet—so Bill can't be such a rotter," said Faulder.

"Jim," said Bob, "is a first-class ass."

We were getting within hail of Christmas, when one morning at breakfast, Dick said: "Forder wants to see me after brekker. What will it be, Frank?"

"Dunno," said I. "Don't fancy interviews with F. very much. Go, and come back speedily or I'll be anxious."

Erpingham did not come back speedily. He was away an unconscionable time, but even that space has an end. "Well," said I, as Dick's six feet framed itself in my study doorway at the end of it, "may I know it?" I looked at him keenly before I asked the question, I may explain.

"Yes," said Dick, standing on my hearth-rug, "you may. *Imprimis*—I'm monitor."

I wrung his hand.

"Thanks, Frank," he said warmly; and then, after a pause, "and Milly's leaving at Christmas—unexpectedly."

"Well, I'm beastly sorry. Decent fellow, Milligan."

"Rather. I'm beastly sorry, too. He always was more'n decent to me."

"Harbour's lot'll be precious sick, Dick."

Erpingham looked at me perplexedly for a moment, and then sat down in my armchair and laughed at some joke he saw.

"So they will, Frank. Jove! so they will."

"Oh! get on, Dick," I said impatiently. "Don't grin there like a Cheshire cat. My intellect is limited."

"Well, Frank," said Dick, drying his eyes, "they'll be pretty beastly jolly sick, for I'm to go to Harbour's in place of Milly." Then he added quietly: "That is no joke."

"Going to leave Crosse's!" I gasped.

"Forder said he wanted me to take Milligan's place—be the bright exemplar of Harbour's house—and, as you know, I can't refuse Forder much. Harbour, he said, was keen on my going. I wish old Harbour had cast his eye on some one else."

"What about our study?"

"Forder was no end reasonable over that. We can go on as before—you and I. Preferably, said F., at Harbour's."

"Well, that's a bit better," said I.

"Frank, I almost told the Head I'd rather not move. He saw as much, of course, but he's as hard as flint when he's got an idea in his head. Harbour wants me to go, and Forder says ditto. I wish to goodness I'd left Bottle and Co. to their own off-side devices, then Harbour would have known me only by my evil reputation."

"You must go, Dick," I said. "I'm no end sorry, though."

"So am I," said Dick. "But there's a bit of news of you, Frank, too. You're *dux*—skipper of the school—or whatever you call your top sawyer here.

"I had rather hoped I might take Wren's place as number one on the Harford list—that had been an ambition for years. And now it was an accomplished fact."

"How did you know?" I asked hurriedly.

"F. showed me the list. It is quite correct. *Firmin. F.*, in all its simplicity. Shake, old man."

"And you, Dick?"

"Well, I'm climbing. I just head all the old Fifth who came up. I'm quite satisfied."

"And Jim Mordaunt?"

"Two above me, which oughtn't to satisfy him."

"Good heavens! No;" and after a minute or two of troubled thought, I quoted Bob's classic phrase: "Jim Mordaunt's a first-class ass."

CHAPTER XIX.

KENT READS "WISDEN."

AFTER Christmas Crosse's knew Erpingham no more. He moved his goods into Milligan's old study in Harbour's house, was received with delight by the juniors, who had been primed for the occasion by Arthur and young Bottle, and without any enthusiasm by Harbour's Fifth fellows, who couldn't see why their house master need have looked beyond the promising material for house captain he had already. I was left to breakfast alone, and I found the solitude not at all to my taste, but change of residence made little difference to our work, as I availed myself of Forder's permission to smug with Erpingham, as much as ever I could.

The school, generally, did not altogether approve of Erpingham as monitor, and had it not been for his services on the evening of the Fifth there would probably have been some overt act showing prejudice. But there was now afloat a disposition to treat him, as Gale had said, on his merits; his action in putting out the fire was held to atone for the Gleam treason; but, as being given to a foreigner, a newcomer, a smug, a former outcast, his monitorship was only tolerated, not endorsed. Dick had to win his spurs yet.

It was about the middle of February when Yolande wrote me a note—a momentous note in its consequences; had it not been written, this tale would never have seen the light. There would have been no tale to tell. Here it is:

WHITEGATES,
Feb. 12.

DEAR FRANK,—We are shutting up Whitegates and going to live in London until July or August. Can you and Dick spend your mid-term *exeat* with us—Saturday until Monday? We should all like you to manage it if it can possibly be done. Both be very, very good, like the little girl who "had a curl in the middle of her forehead," and then Dr. Forder may overlook past offences and let you come!! We will go to the theatre—Agnes, you and D. and I. Only there won't be any fire to put out when we come back. What a pity! Write and let mother know, won't you? I shall miss the roach!

YOLANDE.

I showed Dick my note, and he said: "I should like it of all things. Awfully good of them, isn't it? When could we manage it?"

"Let's say Saturday fortnight."

"So be it."

We both saw the Head, and he gave us each our *exeat*, with his smile—a usual smile now, it seemed to me.

Yolande sent us each a postcard of one word: "Hurrah!"

On the day before we took our *exeat* Forder put New Town out of bounds. He had his reasons—pretty plain reasons, it seemed to me—for making New Town taboo. New Town's annual steeplechases were due—and since the meeting was mainly financed by local publicans, and under no sort of official control by the great racing authorities, it drew as unsavoury a crowd of sharpers, blackguards, and riff-raff as such meetings ever draw. Harfordians did go, despite the out-of-bounds fiat, but they knew their fate if they were found out. But finding them out was difficult, since Forder never altered the hour of 4.30 call-over, and on the moor where these wretched races took place detection was almost impossible. Among Harfordian black sheep the successful evader of school discipline counted for a great man. Monitors were told to be on the alert—an admonition they hated cordially.

Sawyer, Ashford's great man, the new captain, had called a monitors' meeting.

"I suppose some idiot will get through," he said, gloomily, "but if you fellows will police the lanes and fields we may keep a clean bill."

"IF YOU GO OVER THAT GATE, YOU CAN TAKE THE CONSEQUENCES."

"All right," said Gale. "Give us our beats and we'll do the dirty work."

"Why doesn't Forder alter call-over?" grumbled another; "that would stop the rot at once."

"He doesn't believe in kow-towing to those filthy publicans."

"So we have to spend an afternoon in the highways and byways! The one's as bad as the other. That's kow-towing, too."

I was of no use at this detective business, of course: had the black sheep known I was on point duty they would have trotted in my footsteps and, so to speak, gone past in a drove. But I said I'd go with Dick; so together, a good ten minutes before the school generally had risen from dinner, we pegged along to White Lane, where Dick was to keep watch and ward. Within ten minutes of our post at the end of the lane we saw some one on a bicycle coming full pelt towards us. We were under the lea of an old ivy-matted wall, sheltering, for it was a bitterly cold day, and in consequence the cyclist did not see us. It was Kent. At the end of the lane, where the road ends, he got off, locked the wheels of his bicycle together and laid it in the dry ditch, where it lay practically concealed. Bill then threw one leg over the gate, when Dick, anticipating my own movement, came out.

"Half a minute, Kent," said Dick, coolly.

I never saw any one so astonished as Kent. He turned round, balanced as he was on the top rail, and glared angrily at the speaker. When he saw it was Dick his face darkened with a cloud of hate. He swung back again into the lane and with an oath demanded what he wanted.

"Over that gate, Kent, is out of bounds," said Erpingham, coldly.

"Is it? by Jove! And what has that to do with you—you crawling worm?"

"Well, I'm here to tell you that it is. That's all."

"Well, I'm going over——"

Erpingham shrugged his shoulders. "As you like, Kent. Only, if you do—"; and Dick left his hearer to complete the sentence as he liked.

"If I do?" said Kent, striding up to my friend.

"I give Forder your name."

"Better go back, Kent," I observed, coming out.

Kent turned round on me, his eyes blazing with fury. He looked from me to Erpingham, and back again. At that moment for two pins he would have felled me. He did not frighten me in the least. I only feared Kent when he was cool and smiling and bland. Dick caught me by the arm and said quietly: "Go back, Frank, under the wall. Kent knows; that's all we've got to do with him."

"Is it, though?" said Kent, turning from us and climbing deliberately upon the gate again. He was master of himself once more. "I'm going to the races at New Town; came down here hot-foot to escape all sainted apostles like you and your dot-and-go-one friend. And I'm going. You can tell Forder, if you like. I care precious little whether I'm fired out of Harford or not. But if you breathe a syllable about it, your own mother won't know you when she sees you."

"That is as it may be, Kent," said Dick, deliberately, "though it sounds rather like the love talk of the butcher's boy to the oilman's. All the same, if you go over that gate you can take the consequences."

A cold indifference was the only trace of feeling in Dick's level tone, and despite himself, Kent, I feel sure, inwardly knew he was meeting some one as firmly poised as a granite block. He contemplated us both for a few moments, then slowly came into the lane, deliberately fished out his bicycle from the ditch, and went leisurely back.

"Ugly customer, Frank," said Dick.

"And this is, as Gale said, dirty work," murmured I.

The rest of our vigil was uneventful, and after an hour or so of it we went schoolwards.

Kent came into my room before the bell rang for lights out. He was bland and smiling; not the slightest trace of any resentment was in his voice. He purred to me as though I were his best friend. "Sit down, Toothpick. I'll excuse your rising."

"Get out, Kent," said I, flaming.

"Sit down, Firmin," he said, quietly; "I won't keep you above a minute. Do you know what I did this afternoon when you and your pal wouldn't let a quiet, inoffensive chap like me go to the races?"

"Don't know and don't care," said I.

"Drew up my chair to a decent study fire—and—and—and—read the new 'Wisden.'" Kent drawled out "Wisden" as though he loved it.

For the life of me I couldn't help saying, though my cue obviously was to say nothing, '*Wisden*'!"

"Yes, 'Wisden,' Toothpick! Nice book, 'Wisden.' Its dear old yellow cover and its neat brown photographs. Jove! Toothpick, I'm confoundedly glad I didn't go to New

Town this afternoon, but read 'Wisden,' dear old 'Wisden.'"

I eyed Kent steadily as he purred on. Every syllable showed a savage satisfaction. I had rather he had laid his hands on me than smile down at me like that. This time I said nothing, but he jeered on about the merits of "Wisden" until I was almost hysterical. Whatever did he mean? Was he mad, or was I? All at once he demanded, "Do you know why Erpingham left Stonehurst, Toothpick?"

My jaw dropped on the word. My chair creaked under the grip of my hands.

Kent shook a finger at me waggishly.

"Hasn't the Immaculate told his dear friend that? How forgetful!"

I flamed up. "Get out, Kent—you cruel beast!"

"No, Toothpick. Why he left isn't in 'Wisden'—but I know that, too."

Kent took a telegram from his pocket and unfolded it lovingly. He looked from it to me and from me to it, then refolded and put it back whence he had taken it. "Oh! yes, I know that, too. It is a sweet story. Didn't I say he was a plaster saint? Bear me out, Toothpick; didn't I say he was a plaster saint? Didn't I say he must have a sweet record? Well, it's here. I'll let you know it in the morning."

I had lost all control over myself, and for the second time in my life I had raised my crutch to strike a fellow creature with it. Kent had closed the door on my fury.

I had hardly time to sink into my chair before Bob Leaf came in. His face was full of trouble. "Has that beast been in here, Frank? Kent, I mean."

"Yes," said I.

"He's been gloating over me for ten minutes. He knows where Dick came from, and why he came here, Firmin. Is it very bad?"

"I don't know, Bob. I'll never believe it, anyhow."

"Nor I," said Bob. "But he knows, all right. How, though—it couldn't have been Yolande?"

"Yolande, Bob! No fear. He's got it out of 'Wisden.' Let's see what it says."

Bob jumped to my bookcase and got out my new "Wisden." We turned the pages hurriedly until we came to "Bill" Ford's notes on Stonehurst. We saw it all then, for Ford, almost in the opening sentence, had this: "*Stonehurst, in losing R. Erpingham at the beginning of the season, were deprived of the services of one of the most promising cricketers they have had for at least a decade. However,*" &c.

"That's Dick, right enough," said I. "And he's wired to some acquaintance there for information."

"And got it," said Bob, dolefully.

"Yes. Well, we'll hear soon enough what it is. Good night, Bob."

I made up my mind on one thing before I dropped off to sleep. I'd say nothing to Dick about it until our little holiday was over. On the morrow, when I had finished dinner and had gone up to my room to dress, I found a note for me. It was very short.

"Hear you and the Immaculate are off for the week-end. So something will keep for the happy return. Meanwhile, ask your plaster saint why he is so fond of cripples.

"Yours very faithfully,

W. KENT."

(To be continued.)

COMPETITIONS FOR JANUARY.

The attention of Competitors is drawn to the fact that the address of THE CAPTAIN Office is now *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.*

Last day for sending in, January 18. (*Foreign and Colonial Readers, March 18.*)

NOTICE.—At the top of the first page the following particulars must be clearly written, thus:

Competition No. ——, Class ——, Name ——
Address ——, Age ——.

Letters to the Editor should not be sent with competitions.

We trust to your honour to send in unaided work.

Pages should be connected with paper-fasteners; not pins.

Write only on one side of the paper.

COUPONS.—In order to ensure that those who compete for our prizes are actual purchasers of the magazine, we require all competitors to affix to their competitions the coupons which will be found on an advertisement page. A coupon is provided for each competition. Please use paste, gum, or paper-fasteners for attaching these coupons to the paper.

You may send as many attempts for each competition as you like, but each attempt must be forwarded in a separately stamped envelope and bear a coupon.

HONOURABLE MENTIONS.—Counting from the results published in this number, competitors may apply for a certificate of merit when they have been honourably mentioned twelve times.

Address envelopes as follows: Competition No. ——, Class ——, THE CAPTAIN, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.

All competitions should reach us by January 18.

The Results will be published in March.

AGE RULE: A Competitor may enter for (say) an age limit 21 competition, so long as he has not actually turned 22. The same rule applies to the other age limits.

In every case the decision of the Editor is final, and he cannot enter into correspondence with unsuccessful competitors.

No. 1.—***"Famous Painters."***—On one of our advertisement pages you will find twelve pictures. Each picture is intended to represent the name of a famous painter. Write the name under each picture, fill in your name, age, class, and address, tear out the page, and post to us. Prizes: Three "International Match" Footballs, by Messrs. H. Gradidge and Sons. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.
Class III. . . Age limit: Twelve.

No. 2.—***"Tales of Mean People."***—Send an anecdote about a mean person. It must not exceed 200 words in length, and it may be as short as you like—the shorter the better, in fact. Prize: A coloured reproduction of a picture by Mr. Louis Wain, supplied and framed by Messrs. Muller and Co., 62 High Holborn, W.C.

No Age Limit.

No. 3.—***"Certificate of Merit Drawing Competition."***—Design a Certificate of Merit to be awarded to competitors who have been honourably mentioned twelve times. The certificate should be oblong in shape, and of the same size as THE CAPTAIN itself. Not more than three colours should be employed. The Prize will be a Russian Iron Magic Lantern, value £4 4s., manufactured by Messrs. W. C. Hughes. (See Prizes page.)

Age limit . . Twenty-five.

No. 4.—***"'Captain' Readers."***—Describe, in a brief essay not exceeding 300 words, the oldest and the youngest CAPTAIN reader of your acquaintance. If you happen to know the features they are most interested in, we should like to hear what they are. Prizes: Two Boxes of Water-Colours, manufactured by Messrs. George Rowney and Co., Ltd. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 5.—***"A 'Cox' Error."***—A reviewer points out a curious mistake in "Cox's Cough Drops." "This story," he writes, "is a most ingenious account of complications and adventures. We think the author himself must have suffered in the confusion he creates when we find him making Cox——."

Essays pointing out this blunder should not exceed 300 words, and should be written as humorously as possible. First prize, 10s., Second prize 5s.

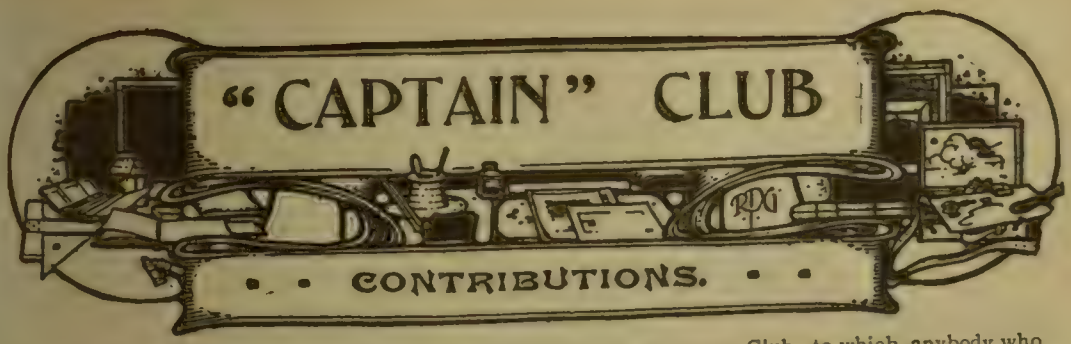
No Age Limit.

No. 6.—***"Stamp Collectors' Competition."***—On an advertisement page you will find a reproduction of six postage stamps from which certain portions have been removed. Cut out the discs and replace them in what you consider to be their correct position. Prizes: Two of Messrs. Bright and Sons Stamp Albums.

Class I. . . Age limit: Eighteen.
Class II. . . Age limit: Twelve.

FOREIGN and COLONIAL READERS are invited to compete. In their case the time limit is extended to ***March*** 18, Australian readers being allowed ten days longer. By "Foreign and Colonial" we refer to readers living ***outside*** Europe. There will be ***no age limit.*** One prize of 5s. will be awarded to the sender of the best entry in each Competition. Envelopes should be marked: "Foreign and Colonial January Competitions."

Coupons must not be sent loose.



THIS part of the Magazine is set aside for Members of the CAPTAIN Club, to which anybody who is a regular purchaser of THE CAPTAIN may belong. Contributions should be kept quite short. Drawings should be executed on stiff board in Indian ink. CAPTAIN Club contributions are occasionally used in other parts of the Magazine.

BOOKS by CAPTAIN authors are awarded to all the contributors to this month's "Captain Club" pages. Each contributor is requested to select a book.

Holiday Hockey Clubs.

A YEAR ago, as a means of enlivening what promised to be very dull holidays, three families arrived at the decison of forming a Mixed Holiday Hockey Club. There may be nothing striking in this, but the idea was formed and executed by the juvenile members of the said families without any adult assistance, which certainly distinguishes it from several similar efforts that we know of.

A committee of seven was chosen, and members were obtained by invitation only. An annual subscription of one shilling was fixed upon and, with a keen eye to business, five parents were asked to become vice-presidents—their subscriptions giving the club a firm financial basis. The unanimously elected president is a schoolmaster who very kindly places his field at the club's disposal during the holidays. Two ladies—heads of schools—also lend their hockey grounds, so in this respect the club is well provided for.

The expenses are not great. Goal nets, bought last season, will last for some time; balls, in fact, form the chief item of expenditure. The members of the club see to the marking out of the field. Teas are only given to clubs visiting from a distance.

At the commencement of the club's career the membership was thirty-one, and so it was decided to limit it to forty, which number it has since attained and could easily exceed. Last season, an entrance fee of one shilling and sixpence was instituted. Taken all round, the club is really very keen, playing as it does, on an average, four games a week. Since its start, twenty matches have been played, of which twelve were won, four lost, and four drawn; with an aggregate of a hundred and one goals for the club, to sixty-two against it.

It is not with the least idea or intention of "puffing" this club that these particulars are given, but in the hope that similar Holiday Hockey Clubs may be founded all over the country. No doubt, in other towns, generously minded headmasters and mistresses may be found willing to lend their school fields, and for the rest—a little trouble, a lot of enthusiasm, and a fair amount of labour on the part of the secretary, will ensure success.

H. ONSEC.

THE PHONO-FIDDLE.

Put together by an unemployed workman to provide a means of livelihood. The instrument produces a rich, mellow sound, which can be heard at a considerable distance.

Photo. by John. B. Twycross.

DAGMAR HOUSE SCHOOL (HATFIELD, HERTS.) FOOTBALL XI.
From a photo.

A School Football Record.

OUT of fifty matches played against neighbouring schools, during the last two seasons, Dagmar House School (Hatfield) won forty-four, drew five, and lost one, scoring in the aggregate two hundred and fifty-four goals to their opponents' thirty-nine. This school, which has for two years in succession won the "Harcourt" Challenge Cup, is remarkable for its cosmopolitan character, as it includes boys hailing from Calcutta, Mafeking, Simla, Philadelphia, Rangoon, and Jamaica. That its successes are not confined to the playing-field is shown by the fact that at the recent Oxford Local Examinations all the students who were entered passed. The correspondent who sends the photographs and these particulars tells us that much of the team's success is due to the training it has received from the master shown in the photograph—Mr. Lishman.

A Sailing Bicycle.

BY means of the sail attached to a lady's bicycle, as shown in the photo., I have covered five miles in a quarter of an hour on an average road (not downhill). The mast, a 9-ft. bamboo, is securely fastened on to the frame of the machine with strong straps, and the sail is controlled by cords attached to each end of a boom passing under the seat pillar. The sail can thus be easily set to any wind, the small slit in it enabling one to see ahead.

A. J. E.

The False Alarm.

VERY few people have heard about the False Alarm, which caused so much excitement in Roxburgh and Berwickshire a hundred and one years ago. At that time it was expected that Napoleon would make an attempt to invade Britain. As the telegraph system was then unknown, reliance had to be placed on signal fires, which were built on the summits of the hills.

On Tuesday, January 31, 1804, the watchman on Hume Castle mistook a charcoal burner's fire for the Dowlow Beacon, and soon the Beacons were ablaze. Men began to pour into the nearest mustering places from the country round about. Before very long they were on their way to Edinburgh under the firm impression that they were going to meet the French. They had gone the length of Dalkeith, about eight miles from Edinburgh, before they were undeceived. A similar mistake was made on the South Coast, as related by Thomas Hardy in "The Trumpet-Major."

The alarm had one good effect, because it showed that these men—all of whom were volunteers—were ready to defend hearth and home. And it added emphasis to the old Border ballad, "My name is Wee Jock Elliot, and wha' daur meddle wi' me!"

So, here's to the Bonnie Borderland!

FREEBOOTER II.

AN INGENIOUS MEANS OF ACCELERATING THE SPEED OF A BICYCLE.

How to Skate.

NOW that winter is with us, those desirous of learning to skate cannot do better than follow these few simple hints.

Fasten your skates on in a room where there is no floor covering, and walk about until you can balance safely on the blades without bending the ankle.

When beginning on the ice, a kitchen chair is a wonderful help. Take a firm hold of the back rail and push it in front of you. By this method one is enabled to discover the motion which is necessary for skating. Don't hurry at first—slow is sure; do not attempt to run—skating is not running, it is a stroke, not a step.

Never lean backwards; a fall forwards will seldom harm, but one backwards may injure your spine.

Watch carefully experienced skaters, analyse their movements and carefully imitate their methods. Be slow at first; practice brings proficiency, and example is always better than precept.

L. W. D.

SWISS SHOEBLACK.

It would seem from the above photograph that, according to some people, there is a considerable difference between the English and American tongue. The gentleman in the picture is a Swiss bootblack, and his box bears the inscription, "English spoken, American understood."
Photo. by "Lustrino."

THE OSTRICH IN THE L.C.C. "ZOO" AT GOLDER'S HILL, HAMPSTEAD.
Photo. by F. V. Symonds.

Tobogganing in Canada.

DURING part of the fall, the whole of winter, and until late in the spring, winter holds uninterrupted sway.

In no other country do the people—all classes, and ages, and both sexes—engage so extensively in outdoor sports as do the Canadians during this season of the year.

With them, winter is the time for amusement, and none know better how to take advantage of it.

The people of Montreal surpass all others in their zeal for winter sports. The first snow-fall acts as an intoxicant. Business is neglected and everybody goes mad. The streets are gay with life. The crunching of snow, the jingle of sleigh bells, and shouts and merry peals of laughter fill the air.

Everybody belongs to a snow-shoe or toboggan club, and hastens to join his friends in the exhilarating sport.

The toboggan *slides* are hills, or a high wooden structure is erected, up one side of which the toboggan is dragged, to shoot down the other with frightful rapidity.

The toboggan is simply a piece of thin board bent at one end. One kind holds but one person, while another is long enough for a dozen or more.

On dark nights the tracks are illuminated by torches stuck in the snow, and huge bonfires are kept burning near by.

Some of the slides are very steep and slippery, and look dangerous, and the sensation of rushing

wildly down hill on a narrow piece of board is too thrilling to be soon forgotten.

GEO. A. GILDERSON.

MICK: "An' do ye belave in dhreams, bedad?"
PAT: "For shure an' Oi do. Only last week Oi drimpt Oi was awake, an' it came true the very nixt mornin', begorrah."

Drawn by Norman Wilks.

Further Quaint Epitaphs.

IN the churchyard at Palgrave, Suffolk, is a tombstone in memory of one Catchpole, a carrier. On the top is carved a waggon and horses, and a whip, and underneath is the following verse:

My horses have done running,
My waggon is decayed,
And now in the dust
My body is laid;
My whip is worn out, and my work it is done.
And now I'm brought here to my last home.

But a much quainter one is the following, taken from St. Mary's Churchyard, Whittlesey, Cambs:

Here lieth the body of
Elizabeth Addison,
John, her son,
And Old Roger is to come.

And on the back of the tombstone:

Old Roger is come.

Also, in the church wall of St. Andrew's, Whittlesey, is affixed a tablet, on which has been carved a butcher's stool with a pig lying thereon, and words recording the fact that the said butcher dropped down dead while in the act of killing a pig on a Sunday.

ALBERT A. KERRIDGE.

Our Noble Selves.

Is it not sweet while all around
The wild white winter tempest rages
To sink in cushioned chair profound,
And turn THE CAPTAIN'S well-filled pages—

Stretched out before the glowing fire,
With mellow lamp precisely shaded,
To read and wonder and admire,
And quite forget one's cross and jaded?

What tales and articles are here
Of worth above all critics' strictures!
What wit in song and jest appear!
What strength and beauty in the pictures!

Some know not of this splendid Mag.—
The Jones's don't; I'll write and tell 'em.
But first, three cheers for the Old Fag,
And three for Wodehouse (Mr. Pelham).

C. V. H. J. THOMPSON.

A Promising Swimmer.

A GOOD many people who now hold Civil Service appointments, and others who are working in the hope of doing so, will be interested in the portrait we publish of Master Clark, of Merchant Taylors' School. E. G. V. Clark is the son of Mr. George E. Clark of Clark's College fame. At the Merchant Taylors' annual swimming races, held at the St. George's Baths, Buckingham Palace Road, E. G. V. Clark won four events out of five entries, viz.: the sixty yards (under sixteen); the plunging (under sixteen), his distance being 36 ft., 5 in., beating the seniors' plunge by 2 ft.; the sixty yards junior handicap, in which he started from scratch; and the sixty yards school handicap, in which he had three seconds start.

We congratulate Mr. Clark on his son's achievements, and trust that E. G. V. displays a similar amount of ability in pursuits of a more serious kind. The obtaining of "first places" seems to run in the Clark family.

E. G. V. Clark.

SOUTHAMPTON STREET,
STRAND, LONDON.

Well, here we are again, about to tread afresh that circular road of life the starting-point of which is January the First and the finish December the Thirty-First. As the bells peal their welcome to the New Year, the same thoughts must occur to all who take the trouble to think. There is no doubt that beginning a new year is like getting another chance in an examination. It is a definite point at which to endeavour to retrieve the past by doing better in the future. Some readers may remark, "You say that sort of thing every year. Can't you think of something fresh this time?" My answer is that I don't want to think of anything fresh, because the one great reflection which should fill our minds on the first day of January is this: Here we are at the starting-post again. How are we going to run *this* time?

As I said last year, the very best possible way of spending the last minutes of the old year is to attend a watch-night service, where one can think quietly over the past and make brave, strong resolves for the future. As you walk to church beneath the starry skies—you may have noticed that it is nearly always fine on the last night of the old year—reflect upon the mystery and greatness of the universe, and feel sure that you, though so small and unimportant a person, have got to play your part to the very best of your ability. Consider well that you can make a heaven of your life or a hell of it. When you are going to do anything wrong or beastly, your conscience tells you that it is so, and you have a will given you to prevent you from doing it. The will is like a muscle; every time you use it you make it stronger; every time you neglect to use it you make it weaker.

To "Pastors and Masters."—People of all ages and conditions can do worse than indulge in a little quiet thought on New Year's Eve. Masters in schools, for instance. Many masters do not realise that they have not only to teach Latin and Greek and mathematics, but that it is also their duty to keep a kindly eye on the moral well-being of the boys under them. You can't treat a form of twenty or thirty boys as if they were all turned out of the same mould; each requires a certain amount of separate study. There would not be anything like so much vice in public schools if house-masters and form-masters took a more immediate and direct interest in every boy placed under their charge. A man who cannot read faces and natures ought not to be a schoolmaster. And there should be no mincing of words. If a form-master sees that a boy is going downhill it is his bounden duty to try and pull that boy up with a little straight talk. If he neglects to fulfil that duty he is proving false to his trust.

I have a great admiration for the scholastic profession. There are few prizes to be won in it, and yet it is crowded with exceedingly able and thoroughly good gentlemen—men who in other walks of life would make a mark. Salaries may be low, headmasters trying, work long and fatiguing, but if a schoolmaster, despite all drawbacks; performs his duty and keeps a watchful eye on the moral as well as the intellectual side

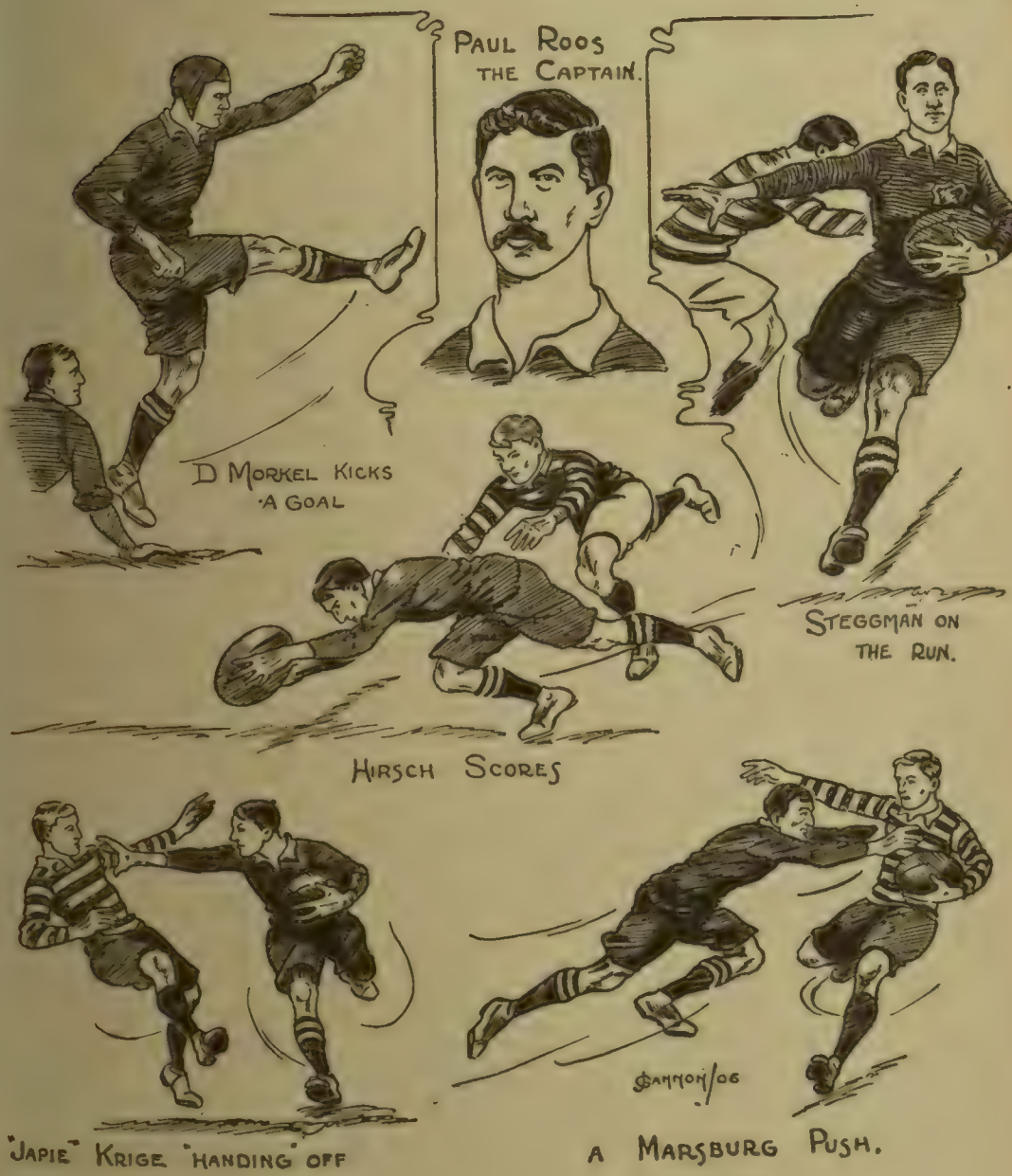
of a boy's school life; he may cheer himself with the reflection that he is doing very great work in the world. Schoolmasters should read that beautiful story in the Christmas number of the *Strand Magazine*, by Owen Oliver, which relates how a headmaster of the very best type comes, late in life, to financial grief, and how his old pupils, bearded and middle-aged men, rally round and prove themselves true friends in his need.

Some people never begin to improve until they find themselves going downhill, when they put on the brake with a jerk and begin to creep up again by slow degrees. The last night of the old year is a very good time for putting the brake on. But it is of little use to make a long list of good resolutions, because too many good resolutions hinder one another's expansion, like trees growing too thickly in a shrubbery. So, if you want to simplify your programme, content yourself with making just this one resolution—that in the new year you will try to think less of yourself. Instead of "bagging" first knock at the nets, wait your opportunity in a reasonable way. Be content to bowl, or to field the big hits that go past the bowlers. I don't want you to turn yourselves into little tin saints—I merely suggest that by cultivating the virtue of unselfishness you will reap as your reward a very much greater amount of happiness than you now enjoy. For one thing, you will make many more friends, and perhaps you have heard it said that the success of a man's life is to be gauged by the number of people who are sorry when he dies.

I may add that a boy will not be turning himself into a little tin saint if he makes up his mind on the first day of the new year that he will never crib and never endeavour to gain an advantage by dishonest methods. What you get that way never does you any good. Nor need you be a little tin saint to make up your mind to say your prayers regularly every morning and every night. There is nothing unmanly in that; some of the greatest and bravest men known to history and to fame have said their prayers regularly, just like little children. And remember above all that although it is a very fine thing to be Lord Kitchener, or the Prime Minister, or Hackenschmidt, yet a very much finer thing than achieving any sort of worldly greatness is to learn how to conquer yourself. . . . Such are a few thoughts for your walk under the stars.

"A Night Aloft."—One of our readers is puzzled by two apparently inconsistent statements in this story, published in our November number. He points out that although the fellow who climbed the church spire heard the cries of children and the noise of hammering, a little later in the story a big cheer from the crowd which was watching them from below failed to reach the ears of the steeplejacks who went to his rescue. In reply to this criticism the author, who has climbed steeples and tall chimneys in many parts of the world, writes: "The apparent discrepancy to which your correspondent refers is due to many things—such as the direction and velocity of the wind, variation in atmosphere, &c., and perhaps not least to the fact that whereas the hero was alone and listless on the scaffold, the steeplejacks were busily engaged. Experimenting in 1862, Mr. Glaisher, the eminent aeronaut, discovered that the discharge of a gun could be heard at an altitude of 10,000 ft., and the barking of a dog at two miles, while the shouting of a multitude was not audible at heights exceeding 4000 ft."

"How Risden played for Abbeyside."—Referring to this tale (printed in our December number), a correspondent writes: "Only a lapse of memory can account for Dr. A. N. Malan's curious anachronisms in his capital story. Of course, the system of scoring by points is quite modern—some forty years, in fact, later than the period in which the story is placed. Up to the early nineties, I believe, one goal, whether dropped or placed, would win a match against any number of tries. I remember that when, not twenty years ago, Wales played Ireland at Birkenhead Park, the latter country was defeated, although they scored three tries to one goal, dropped for Wales by A. J. Gould. Of course, under the present system of points, Ireland would have been handsome winners by nine points to four. In some other respects, also, Dr. Malan's story is curiously modern. For instance, 'passing,' as a system, was a much later development. To 'pass' before he was tackled would—in the 'fifties, and even later—have brought a player under suspicion of funking his man. Another



SOME SKETCHES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY TEAM.
Drawn by J. Gannon.

point: was it usual to play more than one three-quarter on each side much before the 'seventies? I have an impression that the three 'threes' arrangement did not come in so early. The account of the 'maul in goal' is not quite accurate, either. I have enjoyed Dr. Malan's stories often in the old days."

"Tales of Mean People."—If you consult the competitions page you will see that we are offering prizes for the best anecdotes relating to meanness. It is almost incredible what certain people will do to save a halfpenny. Here is an example that was related to me recently. Two men were playing cards in a train, and just before they

"DRAWING OF A SIGNBOARD" COMPETITION, SEPTEMBER 1906.
DRAWN BY GEORGE W. KEMP, PRIZE-WINNER, CLASS I.

reached their destination it was discovered that one owed the other 6½*d*. "Well," said the man that had lost his money, "here's the sixpence; I'm sorry I've not got a halfpenny." "Oh, all right, I'll take that," said the other, pointing to a copy of the *Star* which his friend had bought. And he took it, too.

In the *Referee* for December 2, Mr. George R. Sims ("Dagonet") relates a very quaint anecdote relating to a man who must have been a gold medallist in meanness. As a boy, Mr. Sims was taken by his father to see the Duke of Wellington's funeral.

My family escort had secured the window of a coffee-shop on the line of route, and the proprietor had sold every available inch of his shop window. We began to feel very warm as the morning wore on—we had been in our places at five o'clock—and it was proposed that the company should subscribe sufficient money to recompense the proprietor for knocking out one or two of the panes in the front. Everybody subscribed except one old gentleman. Two panes were broken. Through one of them the old gentleman who had declined to pay instantly thrust his head and exclaimed: "Thank God for a little fresh air."

But the meanest man we have ever heard of was the hero of a joke published by *Tit-Bits* some years ago. Having fallen into a river and been rescued with much difficulty, he stole the grappling irons with which he had been fished out!

Henty's Successors.—Since the death of Mr. G. A. Henty, several writers for boys have been pronounced his "successors," either by their publishers or by critics. I should say myself that there is no one who can actually take Mr. Henty's place, and I will take this opportunity to quote the gentle and timely remonstrance recently put forth by another famous writer for boys in the person of Mr. George Manville Fenn. In the course of a review of boys' books in the *Daily Chronicle* for November 30, Mr. Fenn remarked:

One might say that it cannot be the wish of the clever writers whose books are being noticed, to be told, as has grown to be the custom, that they are wearing the cast-off garment of one who has passed away. Surely they would rather be content with the fame they earn for themselves! Such would certainly have been the feeling of George Henty, the bluff, straightforward, manly author, an old and good friend, a pattern of industry, who devoted his pen to the duties of chronicling the deeds and bravery of our soldiers and sailors at home and abroad. His long roll of stories has become the backbone of school libraries; his name stands high in every list, and as one writes memory brings up the sturdy, well-built, fierce-looking soldier just back from the Ashantee War, face blackened—not browned—by the deadly heat of the West African sun.

It is to be hoped that this tactful protest will have its intended effect.

Flood Tides.—This is the title of a book of poems by Mr. A. B. Cooper, who has contributed to THE CAPTAIN from time to

DRAWN BY ROBERT LEO PAYNE, CLASS I.

time. Mr. Cooper has been writing hymns, carols, poems, and political verses for a good many years, and this collection represents the cream of his lyrical fancy. The volume is one which I can heartily recommend to readers who would like to give their friends this Christmas a book of poetry of an uplifting and inspiring nature. Here is an example of Mr. Cooper's muse at its best:

SEPTEMBER.

'Twould seem but yesterday that Spring
And Hope, together, made me glad;
That earth in tender green was clad,
And mating birds began to sing.

'Twould seem the cuckoo's note last night
Came with the scent of mignonette,
While scarce the lingering sun had set
Ere throstles heralded the light.

Alas! how brief is summer grown!
How soon September follows May!
'Twas surely but the other day
This field of golden grain was sown.

Yet now 'tis reaping time, and men
Will toil amid the rustling corn
Till earth is of her harvest shorn;
And they who reap must sow again.

So speeds my life, and I must stand
A harvester before the King:
When He shall ask me what I bring
Shall I but show my empty hand?

"Flood Tides" is published by Messrs. Marshall Bros., Paternoster Row, E.C., price 2*s*.

"Z" sends me the following paragraph from a recently published book entitled "The Soul Market":

A hideous evil that exists, not only in London, but in many of the large cities in Britain, is the Italian *padrone*, who brings over numbers of little boys, and keeps them in a state of slavery—treating them like animals, and sending them out into the streets with concertinas and monkeys, to beg. One awful case of slavery of this kind came under my own knowledge, and, through friends, I was able to rescue three unfortunate children who were the slaves of a great brute of a *padrone*.

This man kept the boys in a cellar. They had no beds, but slept on a heap of rags cuddled up with the monkeys to keep themselves and the poor beasties warm. If they returned home with less than a shilling each night, the *padrone* beat them cruelly, and they got no food at all.

That such slavery should be countenanced by English law and the British people is shameful. It is a common story enough to find these tiny child-slaves working their little lives away to keep a hulking brute of a master, who owns them body and soul.

I hope that the publicity given to this matter will set the authorities on the track of the precious *padrone* that carries on this vile business.

The last of "Jungly."—My readers will hear with much regret of the death of Mr. E. Cockburn Reynolds, which took place in November. Born in India, Mr. Reynolds had but a frail constitution, and one not suited to battle with the rigours of our climate. He would have been well advised to return to his native land years ago, but he clung to London, and, to our sorrow, paid the penalty in the bleak weather

THE LATE MR. E. COCKBURN REYNOLDS AT WORK IN HIS STUDIO.

which succeeded the mildness of October. Readers of THE CAPTAIN in its earlier years will have vivid recollections of the clever and ingenious "Jungly" tales that Mr. Reynolds wrote for us. There is no doubt that "Jungly," the remarkably gifted Indian companion of the author's hunting trips (as described in our pages), was an excellently conceived and absorbingly interesting character. The illustrations supplied by the author will also be remembered with appre-

ciation. A souvenir of his skill, a picture of an Indian lady painted specially for the Old Fag, adorns our office walls. Reynolds was a gentle, retiring soul, full of feeling, and of great understanding. The sympathy of all CAPTAIN readers, coupled with our own, will, I am sure, be with the mother and relatives of this talented writer and artist, who has "gone home" before he had achieved half man's allotted span of years. Good-bye, "Jungly."

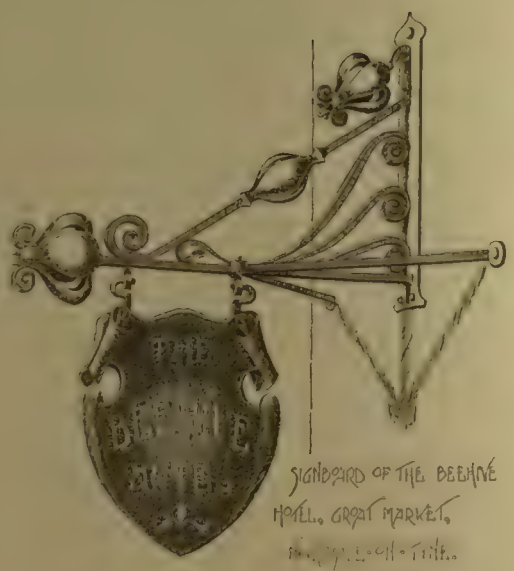
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

[As we receive a great number of letters, our correspondents are requested to bear in mind that we can only comment on communications that we consider to be of general interest. Readers requiring information quickly should enclose stamped envelopes or postcards, according to the length of the answer they desire.]

"Burnleyite."—You certainly seem to have had too much home work to do, but I cannot say whether you were overworked otherwise, as you don't mention your hours. The reason so many people go to watch professional football is that it makes such a splendid show in return for a small admission fee. Borough Councils and other organisations of that sort could promote more amateur football by arranging for footballers to be carried at reduced rates by trams and trains. Until this is done I do not think that more football will be played, because it is so difficult to get grounds near large centres of population. I still think that "trip-ball" is the proper designation for professional football. The professional footballer, as a well-known writer on the game recently remarked, is a straight enough fellow, and he has no personal desire to trip an opponent, but he knows that his side is expected to win matches, and that if he saves his goal with a timely trip he will not exactly *shock* his pork-butcher directors. When a club becomes notorious for fouling, its directors should be fined and suspended. That is the way to stop trip-ball.

"C. Sense," referring to my remarks about boys and girls meeting one another and taking walks together unbeknown to their parents, says that this sort of thing obtains very largely in London. "People," he adds, "notice such goings-on very quickly; they give the school a bad name, and when the boys get on in life and leave school they go from bad to worse. The school can do nothing, the parents almost less. It is the boys themselves who ought to take the matter in hand and stop these harmful doings."—I thoroughly agree with "C. Sense," and think it would be a very good thing if the head boys in our large London day schools were to carry on a crusade against such proceedings.

"Derek" says, "If public school boys work too hard, then what about the boys between fifteen and eighteen who are learning engineering?" "Derek" is doing that. Except on Sunday he turns out at half-past five in the morning, starts work at six, and continues with two intervals of about an hour each until 5.30 P.M. This makes nine and a half hours of hard work. Add to this physical work the evening book work, which comes to about fifteen hours per week, and "Derek" thinks that in comparison the schoolboy gets off lightly.



DRAWN BY WILLIAM H. SHEPPARD, CLASS I.

"Outspoken."—Look out for your character next month. I am getting an expert graphologist to give me assistance, but a fee of sixpence for the Old Fag's Money Box must be paid before any character is read. Your suggestion that we should not trust to the honour of our readers to send in unaided work, because to your certain knowledge a number of readers are quite ready to sell their honour for a football or a stamp album, is one that I cannot adopt. If competitors like to be so mean as to send in work which is not their own, they must continue to be so, and if they enjoy the possession of prizes which they have gained by dishonest methods—well, I do not envy them. The great majority of competitors are perfectly honest in their work—of that I am sure.

"Romney" turns the tables on me by telling me *my* character from my handwriting. I have put her delineation in my top blush locker. With regard to the mathematical mistake in Mr. Wodehouse's tale, "A Division of Spoil," to which "Subscriber" recently drew attention, "Romney" says it is quite easy to see that "516" pages was a printer's error for "416," and that the latter number of pages gives thirty-two boys exactly thirteen each, so that Mr. Wodehouse goes up top again. This is all very well, but "Romney" is wrong in one little particular. The "516" was not a printer's error, but was the number actually given by the author in his tale, so that Mr. Wodehouse, after going up, comes down again with a run.

"An Old Merchant Taylor" writes: "Please correct the title of the photo. on page 183 of the November number, showing two members of the South African team writing their autographs for youthful 'hunters.' The description of the photo. says it was taken at Richmond, but any present or past Merchant Taylors' boy will very soon recognise the scene as being part of the playground of Merchant Taylors' School in Charterhouse Square,

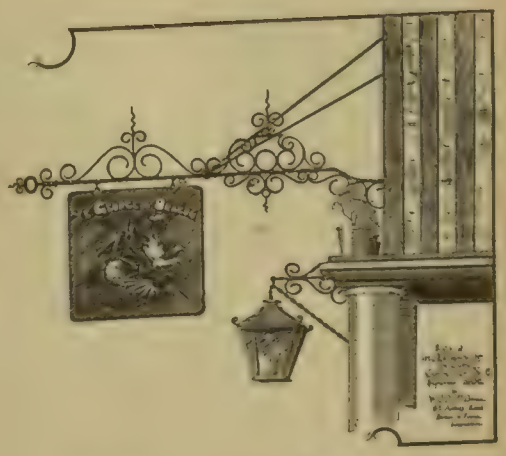
where, by the kindness of the Head, the South Africans often practise. I may add that the 'Taylors' also had the privilege of watching the 'All Blacks' practising on the same ground last season."

"Creole" sends me a long, interesting letter from Canada, and from his handwriting I should judge him to be a very straightforward, nice fellow. Talking about games, he remarks that baseball is not a gentleman's game as played in Canada, and that no ladies go to the games, which often end in rowdyism. Lacrosse, too, has degenerated greatly. Hockey is the ideal Canadian game. "Creole" astonishes me with the information that quite a number of girls' schools in Canada and the States play Rugby football. Football of any kind is a most unsuitable game for girls, and the sooner Canadian and American girls leave off playing it, the better.

H. C. B. R.—(1) Retrospection and introspection are unhealthy if one carries them so far as to keep a diary about one's spiritual and moral progress. (2) Of course, it is absurd to teach girls the use of the rifle. Women are always regarded as non-combatants. (3) I did not think that "Critic" was the sort of chap who would mind our reproducing his handwriting. Otherwise, I should not have reproduced it. I have had a letter from "Critic" expressing his pleasure over the matter. Still, I agree with you that a good many fellows would not like it. One has to use one's judgment in these matters.

"Loco. Engineer."—All you have to do is to turn to our advertisement pages to find the addresses of firms from whom you can obtain sectional drawings of locomotives. If they cannot supply you with the exact drawings you want, they will tell you where you can get them. I am afraid I cannot favour you with "Eileen's" address, although I agree with you that Eileen seems to be a very nice girl. You must look about and find some other Eileen for yourself. It is rather curious that in asking for the address of one of our fair readers you omit to put your own on your letter.

DRAWN BY FRANK MADDOX, PRIZE-WINNER, CLASS II.



DRAWN BY W. J. P. MCDOWELL, CLASS I.

"St. Johnian."—Beginning to count from this (January) number, we shall present a certificate to every reader who is honourably mentioned twelve times. As soon as a reader has been honourably mentioned that number of times he may apply for his certificate. It would be absurd to grant a certificate for one honourable mention. Fancy forwarding a handsomely illuminated certificate of merit to some one who had sent in a rather good anecdote on a post-card! Twelve honourable mentions, on the other hand, would show a competitor to be a pretty smart all-round tryer.

A. Green.—The "Athletic Corner" has not been dropped. It has simply been suspended for a few months, chiefly because we have a lot of other articles in hand that have been awaiting space for years. You will agree with me that under these circumstances an Editor naturally prefers to print articles that he has accepted and paid for, rather than order a lot of new ones. However, the "Athletic Corner" will shortly bloom forth again, and I am getting some distinguished writers to contribute to it.

Parliamentary Information.—A short time ago a correspondent wrote asking me where he could get a list of the Cabinet. I said, in *Whitaker's Almanack*, but "Parliament" reminds me that the present Cabinet would not be found in the 1906 *Whitaker*, but will be in the 1907 edition. Those readers who want to take their fill of parliamentary information should get the *Parliamentary Companion*, price 6*d*., published monthly by Vacher and Sons, Westminster House, Great Smith Street, S.W.

"Captainite."—We have not finally dropped essay competitions having to do with events and celebrities, but a change of diet is good for everybody.

Hugh Fraser Mackie is the sort of constant reader I like. He has taken in THE CAPTAIN since the first number appeared, and still has it sent out regularly to him at the San Juan Mines, Safford, Arizona, U.S.A. I daresay he would appreciate one or two picture post-cards from CAPTAIN readers. I am very glad to hear that the miners like THE CAPTAIN, and I wish H. F. M. the best of luck and trust he will come back to England a rich man.

G. S. is looking out for a job, and recently consulted a book called "One Thousand Ways of Earning a Living." G. S. was much disgusted to find himself confronted with particulars as to "charing," "street vegetable barrows," and the like. I have recommended G. S. a book which will be more to his liking, entitled, "Vocations for Our Sons" (T. Fisher Unwin, *2s. 6d.*), and this he is now reading.

G. Homan sends a photo. of an interesting ruin, which we print herewith. This ruin may be seen in the vicinity of Racton, Hants, and G. H. wants to know whether it is of historical interest. Well, I wonder why, when he was on the spot, G. H. did not make these inquiries for himself, as a fellow

AN OLD RUIN NEAR RACTON, HANTS.

taking photographs at Racton is in a far better position to get information about the place than an aged gentleman in an office near the Strand. Perhaps some reader can supply the information that G. H. was apparently too unenterprising to obtain for himself.

"Slogger" is an Irish schoolboy and is very keen on football. He says, "I have never yet come across an Irish boy who liked cricket better than football. I think it is because in the latter game there is more opportunity of letting off steam. We don't like spinning out a game here, but while we play we play like mad."—Yes, the South Africans discovered that, "Slogger."

Models of Battleships.—"Navarmy" writes: "Models of battleships may be seen in the Museum of the Royal United Service Institution, Whitehall, London, S.W., and also at the South Kensington Museum, in the rooms specially set aside for models of ships. Those in the former institution are probably the best and most up to date. The admission fee is sixpence."

"Pig" (Jamaica).—Look out in the next number for your character. Meanwhile, you can be sending along the sixpence. I don't want to hear your views on the Hickson question, having received quite enough views on that subject, but a short essay (about 300 words) describing the peculiar design on the Jamaica penny stamp *would* be of interest.

Janet Wyatt.—Our hound is at present training for Christmas. Three times a day he spurts from the office at full speed and goes thrice round Covent Garden Market, causing a good deal of havoc among the baskets. In fact, instead of being baskets-villed, they are baskets-empty when he has done with them.

A. and D. Cauffmann (Paris).—If I may borrow the phrase of a recent correspondent, I trust you are both "in the pink." Sixpence for the Old Fag's Money Box procures a brief delineation of character. Your letter, together with a good many others, has been put aside pending the arrival of that sum.

"Puella."—It is evident that it is natural for you to be heavy, so you should not worry your head about it. It is absurd of naturally thin people to crave after being fat, and *vice versâ*. Make the best of yourself as you are, and thank God you are not consumptive or paralysed.

"Raffles."—C. by h. n. m. Yes, "The Long 'Un" was by the author of "J. O. Jones." It was published in book form under the name of "Jim Mortimer, Surgeon." The *Times* Book Club will get it for you. The publishers are George Newnes, Ltd., and the price *3s. 6d.*

A. C. Burrows sends me in that weary old chestnut beginning "*Is ab ille eris ago*," and asks whether I think it is good enough for our pages. It would have been good enough for them if THE CAPTAIN had been brought out fifty years ago. Still, Burrows means well.

"Bob."—Have read your thoughtful letter with interest. It would be a good thing if other boys of your age were to form as high an ideal of girlhood as you do, and it would be a good thing if girls lived up to the high standard you insist on in your girl friends.

James Maguire (South Australia).—The little joke you send is not funny enough. A much quainter reply was that of a little London boy who, in answer to the question, "What is grass?" said, "Something that you must keep off."

"An Interested Reader."—If I put in all the Corners that are suggested by readers there would hardly be anything in THE CAPTAIN except "Corners." I will bear in mind what you say, however.

Z. Y. X.—If you are fifteen years of age and your "hight" is five feet six inches, there is every probability that you will put on another three or four inches, or possibly another six.

"A Master and His Dog."—These verses, published in our December number, were contributed by A. A. Patterson, and not E. J. Patterson, as stated.

"Q."—Judging by your letter I should say that our delineator will have some very nice things to say about you when you send along that little sixpence.

"Tangolian."—Sixteen is not too young to leave school to study art, but one ought to be very good indeed at art to leave school at sixteen to study it.

"Foll."—Your proportions seem to be all right, but if you want your handwriting told you

must send sixpence to my Money Box, young feller.

G. Foster.—Get up your team of CAPTAIN readers by all means. I am afraid you will not find it easy, as most readers belong to school or other clubs.

Old Fag's Money Box.—The amounts sent will be acknowledged next month.

Employment Bureau.—As readers do not seem to be particularly keen on this proposed new feature, we have decided to drop it.

Letters, &c., have also to be acknowledged from: "Taylorian," George Sheppard, T. McGregor, "Communitive," "One Who has Known," A. J. Cameron, Norman E. Croager, B. Glossop, L. S. Krishman (S. India), H. Goodbrand (Durban), Alexander Jacobson, O. D. B. "Cantab," John Vilers, S. H. Cox, "Novocastra," "Mundane," "A Club member," "Rhoda," "A Scotch Lassie," "M. S. Eip," W. H. Hedges.

THE OLD FAG.

A CLEVER CARICATURE OF MR. OWEN SEAMAN, WHO SUCCEEDED SIR FRANCIS BURNAND AS EDITOR OF "PUNCH."

Reproduced from "Captain Tweenie and the Press," by kind permission of Messrs. Martin Bros., 25 Cheapside, E.C.

Percy Day.—A machine for binding the CAP. so that it would open flat would be rather too expensive a luxury for *us*, Percy.

"Nesc."—Some of these screamingly funny things are only funny if we know the people who say them.

"Suggester."—There is nothing the matter with your writing. Will bear your suggestion in mind.

Results of November Competitions.

No. I.—"Famous British Soldiers."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF JOHN PIGGOTT "CUP TIE" FOOTBALL: George Lewcock, "Truelands," High Street, Hampton Hill.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: Leonard P. Platt, West View, Whitefield, nr. Manchester; J. C. Matthew, 10 Mamhead View, Exmouth.

HONOURABLE MENTION: W. Donaldson, B. Hossack, P. Eustace Petter, W. S. Leeming, David C. Hume, W. S. Hay, Francis C. Millington, Frank C. Nicol, B. F. Lawrance, R. Rands, Harold Scholfield, W. E. Cooper, W. J. Juleff, Thomas Curley, Charles V. Johnson.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF JOHN PIGGOTT "CUP TIE" FOOTBALL: Reginald J. Drury, 12 Elmbourne Road, Tooting Common, S.W.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Dorothy W. Davison, 16 Manor Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.

HONOURABLE MENTION: R. Clutterbuck, H. K. Gibsone, Frank Round, Sydney Lloyd, W. M. Madgin, R. T. Agate, W. Trevelyan Clark, John H. Banks, E. H. Bonney, P. F. Goodman, A. C. Bingham, Alec J. Duncan, G. H. Bottomley.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Twelve.)

WINNER OF JOHN PIGGOTT "CUP TIE" FOOTBALL: Thomas Montgomery, 1 Helsby Street, Sutton Oak.

HONOURABLE MENTION: F. Page Phillips, S. Marshall, R. H. Ward, P. M. George, Eric Miéville, K. G. Denniss, W. Brodie, Bertie McKeand, Charles Wake, Guy Fairbairns, R. C. Whitton, G. F. Boure, C. E. Whipps.

No. II.—"Turn-about Competition."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF POSTCARD ALBUM: Frederick G. Lawson, Church Farm, East Barnet, Herts.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: W. J. Juleff, 50 Cautley Avenue, Clapham, S.W.

HONOURABLE MENTION: R. Smith, Kathleen E. Brigden, C. D. Griffiths, Barbara G. Hunter, A. M. Hill, K. Jordan, W. H. Palethorpe, E. C. Mortimer, E. N. Umpleby, B. Bonner, Tom Haslam, Cecil H. Emmett, Edith E. Windover.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF POSTCARD ALBUM: Granville Shilson, Devonshire House, Sandown, I.W.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Jessie Wakely, 18 Crystal Palace Road, East Dulwich.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Robert Brockie, Hilary Davison, Robertson Holmes, G. M. Byres, John Beach, Henry S. Patterson, P. H. Hanbury, Arthur C. Toplis, R. Boycott, W. Edwards, Harry Nelson, D. Dare.

No. III.—"Old Sayings in Verse."

CLASS I. (No age limit.)

WINNER OF AUTOGRAPHED COPY OF "Cox's COUGH-DROPS": George Milne, 29 Roseberry Street, Aberdeen.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: Mrs. A. A. Farmer, 23 Roseberry Terrace, Sandown, I.W.; Alex Scott, Jr., Burnside House, Tillicoultry.

HONOURABLE MENTION: K. A. Braimbridge, Mollie Mason, G. Browne, Sydney F. Barton, Irene Ofverberg, Joseph H. Heeley, S. J. Giles, M. Alexander, Nora Giltinan.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF AUTOGRAPHED COPY OF "Cox's COUGH-DROPS": B. Roe, 3 Belgrave Square, W.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: James Bland, 6 Windsor Street, Glasgow.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Edith Allen, James E. Wight, C. E. P. Brooks, Xavier le Maistre, Constance Rendell, J. S. Wilkes, A. Gladys Holman, M. M. MacLachlan, V. S. King, E. B. Hindley, H. J. Hewitt, Dorothy Haynes.

No. IV.—"Picture Gallery Competition."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF "HOBBIES" FRETWORK OUTFIT: R. Murray Robertson, 68 Ebury Street, S.W.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: A. G. Holman, 22 St. Andrew's Mansions, Dorset Street, Baker Street, W.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Maude Bosworth, M. R. Moss, J. C. Matthew, Fred. Paley, H. G. Evans, George F. Saunders, Norman Smith, Joan Hadden.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF "HOBBIES" FRETWORK OUTFIT: John A. Haslam, 11 Southdean Gardens, Wimbledon Park, S.W.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: J. H. Martin, "Wolfreton," Blackburn Avenue, Bridlington Quay.

HONOURABLE MENTION: L. R. Walters, Harry Aston, Frank Sorrell, Douglas E. Hearn, D. Carrington, P. H. Hanbury, M. Walker G. W. W. Hooper, M. E. Nolan, Arthur Balfour.

No. V.—"Non-repeat Competition."

One age limit: Twenty-one.

WINNER OF ROBERT H. INGERSOLL AND BRO.'s "BONHEUR" WATCH: Fred W. Bayliss, 27 Izons Road, West Bromwich.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: Leonard Carter (Junr.), 75 Goods Station Road, Tunbridge Wells; Charles Greig, 82 Pendle Road, Streatham, S.W.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Arthur R. Jones, K. B. Davis, Thos. H. Waugh, Dorothy Burdett, C. N. Loveday, E. C. Cushing, C. J. Hay, D. H. Daubney, Harold E. Mansfield, James Young, Harold Lamb, Cissy Brockie.

No. VI.—"Character from Handwriting."

WINNER OF BENETFINK AND CO.'s "FLASH" CAMERA: J. W. Mandefield, 122 Monkgate, York.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: David John Jones, 10 Lincoln Street, Llandyssul, South Wales; Leonard J. Hodson, Mill House, Robertsbridge; T. W. Spikin, 347 Bensham Lane, Thornton Heath.

HONOURABLE MENTION: W. H. Palethorpe, Charles Potter, Gladys Savory, Bernard C. Curling, Barbara G. Hunter, Hubert F. Hewetson, Frances Tinckler, Olive Bath, H. J. Hall, R. G. Elliott, E. J. G. Owen, Walter Ralph Banks, Dorothy K. G. Watkins, Gordon Beach, Elsie M. Roddie, Dorothy Alice Hilton, George E. McCaw.

Foreign and Colonial Readers (September).

No. I.—WINNER OF 5s.: Frank Eckel, 87 Woodford Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad, B.W.I.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Aubrey du Toit (Cape Colony), J. Hawken (Cape Colony), E. G. Glassford (Melbourne), P. C. McConnachie (Transvaal).

No. III.—WINNER OF 5s.: Gordon A. Jahans, Bishop Cotton School, Simla, India.

HONOURABLE MENTION: J. Hawken, C. Mayes (Lucknow).

No. IV.—WINNER OF 5s.: William W. Palmer, P.O. Box 100 Castries, St. Lucia.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Pearl Sorzano (Trinidad), Frank A. Parkins (Canada), W. Scatterty (Johannesburg), George F. Prykett (Penang), Charles Manning (Cape Town), Alice Hill (Melbourne), N. V. Tonkin (Transvaal).

No. V.—WINNER OF 5s.: J. Boase, 2 Packington Street, Kew, Victoria, Australia.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Eliot Gunter (Melbourne), J. Leslie R. Stap (South Africa), D. A. Turpin (India), Leslie H. Burket (Montreal), G. N. Edben (Cape Colony), Kate Campbell (New South Wales), B. A. Spence (St. Vincent), Arnold Foote (Jamaica), Allan M. Petry (Toronto), Alfred E. Smith (New Zealand), Roderic Linn (Montevideo).

Winners of Consolation Prizes are requested to inform the Editor which they would prefer—a volume of one of our magazines, or one of the following books: "Cox's Cough-Drops." "The Duffer," "The Rising of the Red Man," "The Gold Bat," "J. O. Jones."

Comments on the November Competitions.

No. I.—A correct list will be found on an advertisement page. Nearly every one sent in correct solutions, so that the competition was decided by neatness. Alternative suggestions for Nos. III. and IV. were "Eyre" and "Harold"—further comment is unnecessary!

No. II.—A large number of good and painstaking lists were submitted, some of which included almost unknown words—a large proportion of which I found actually to exist, however, on looking them up in the dictionary. I must again remind competitors that they are expected to *count the words in their lists* when sending in competitions of this description. One or two were over-anxious on this point and counted each word twice, such as: wolf = flow = 2!

No. III.—Some very creditable versions of old proverbs were sent in, but many competitors appear to have very hazy ideas on the subject of metre.

No. IV.—This by no means easy competition was successfully attacked by a number of competitors, and many most ingenious efforts were submitted.

No. V.—Although in many cases the draughtsmanship left something to be desired, some very amusing and cleverly concealed "titles" reached us.

No. VI.—Most competitors, though not altogether correct in certain of their deductions, made very fair attempts at reading "Critic's" character as shown in his handwriting. The Editor will refer to this matter next month.

THE COMPETITION EDITOR.

"Useful voice my girl's got, eh?"
"Extremely, in case of fire!"

[*Drawn by R. Murray Robertson.*]

FROM THE BUSHES THERE SLOWLY EMERGED A HUMAN HEAD AND FACE.

THE CAPTAIN

A MAGAZINE FOR BOYS AND "OLD BOYS"

VOL. XVI. FEBRUARY, 1907 No. 95.

IN SEARCH OF SMITH,

A Romance of Unexplored Australia.

By JOHN MACKIE.

Author of "The Rising of the Red Man," "The Heart of the Prairie," &c.

Illustrated by R. Caton Woodville.

An expedition to the unexplored region of the Northern territory of South Australia is organised by General Sir Donald Taylor for the purpose of finding his old friend Smith, an eccentric explorer, who is supposed to be held captive by blacks. The story is told by Richard Payne, a retired Army surgeon. Madge, the general's niece, accompanies the party with the object of visiting her friends the Millars, who are encamped on the MacArthur River. After many exciting experiences, the expedition reaches the MacArthur River only to find that the Millars have departed. The attention of the expedition is attracted to a great white gum-tree, on which is cut the single word: DIG.

CHAPTER XVI.—(*continued.*)

IN NO MAN'S LAND.

WITH a sense of keen disappointment and curiosity some one took a spade and attacked the soil. Not more than eighteen inches from the surface we found an old pickle-bottle, tightly corked. We opened it and abstracted the paper it contained. On it was written in ink: "To those whom it may concern," and the message went on to say that the Millars, having taken up all the grazing country in that valley, had returned to Boorooloola, the embryo township near the mouth of the MacArthur River, to await fresh supplies by boat, and the mob of cattle that was on its way by the coast route to stock their new country.

The document also warned travellers to keep a sharp look-out, as the blacks were particularly numerous and dangerous in the neighbourhood. Several horses had been speared by them. On one occasion, on a prospecting trip to the south, and about fifty miles distant from that spot, a white man on horseback had been sighted. Through field-glasses he was seen to be wearing a battered old pith helmet, while his shirt was in rags and sleeveless. He had a revolver on his waistbelt, and carried a long rifle, while strapped to the saddle he also carried a prospector's pick and a shovel. When signalled to by firing, he had disappeared. A roving stockman had caught a glimpse of him on another occasion, but the mysterious stranger had again made himself scarce when signalled, and disappeared to the south.

"That was Smith—Smith for a certainty!" exclaimed Sir Donald. "Any other man, unless he were a madman or a bushranger, would have been only too glad to see white men; but Smith was always one of the most standoffish and independent sort of fellows under the sun—that is to say, until you knew him, and then he was one of the best."

"If he keeps out of our way as effectively as he seems to have kept out of the Millars',"

I observed, "it doesn't look very promising for our obtaining an interview with him."

"Anyhow, he doesn't seem to be attached to any black party. That's one comfort," said Sir Donald.

But the difficulty now facing us was what to do with Madge. There was a world of anxiety on Sir Donald's face as he turned to look at her. Before he could open his mouth, she said:

"You're not sending me down the river, Uncle. Don't for one moment imagine I'm not going with you. You see, there's Mrs. Bailey, who was to have been left here, and that would mean Bailey too, and I daresay another man, and you know as well as I do that under existing circumstances you want every man you've got. You can't risk failure now by breaking up your party, and, as that note tells us, Mr. Smith has been seen in the neighbourhood. You may fall in with him any day now. I haven't been a drag on you, have I, Uncle?"

There was no getting away from "existing circumstances." We could not help ourselves. Scheme as we might, there was nothing for it but to accept the risk or go back in a body, and that was not to be thought of. To divide our party might only mean disaster to both sections.

"We've got to change front," said Sir Donald, with his characteristic promptness in making up his mind. "We've got to take you on, Madge, and the Baileys too, so there's an end of it. Now we've got to strike due south into No Man's Land."

Next day we found ourselves well out of the valley and on a plateau that sloped slightly to the south. Everywhere there were numerous signs of blacks, but we did not come in actual contact with them. We took extra precautions at night, and Sam Holt and Bird bestired themselves and seemed as anxious as any of us to push on. Still, I knew they were scheming, and I realised that their machinations were only limited by the degree to which they could corrupt those around them. I rode alongside Madge and discussed the outlook with her. I was anxious, I said, that she should be careful in her movements and take no risks by straying away alone. "It would be awkward you know," I observed, "if you should happen to be some distance away from the others, and chance to run against Hawker."

"It would be terrible," she replied with an unwontedly grave expression on her face, "but I've always got my rifle."

"And he has always been accustomed to taking the initiative," I suggested.

"But just fancy what Holt and Bird and, perhaps, some of the others will suffer if they should chance to run across him," she said. "You know they think he's dead and buried. I'd like to see Sam Holt's face if he did. There's only one thing on earth such men fear, and that's anything savouring of the supernatural. Then they're the biggest cowards under the sun. Hawker must think he saw Parker's ghost the other night."

The following morning there were great hills looming up away to the south-west. These were the Never-Never Mountains, our *ultima thule* and the presumed headquarters of Smith. I was riding along with Sir Donald and Madge when suddenly the former stopped and pointed to a large tree bearing an inscription. We rode up to it and found, cut into the soft bark, the somewhat suggestive and grandiloquent notice:

BILL SMITH.
Farthest North.

"That's Smith, by Jove!" exclaimed Sir Donald. "If the world contained nothing but Smiths, I'd know it was our particular one, for I never in my life knew him to miss his little opportunity for a jest."

All that day we followed down a lovely creek which more than anything else resembled a chain of lagoons. The banks were fringed with picturesque pandanas, cycas palms and tree ferns. In some of these long deep rocky pools we saw a great number of small crocodiles. Some of them floated basking on the surface of the water like logs. It was here that Maitland asked a question of Sir Donald which, to tell the truth, had been suggesting itself to me. And the result was a little eye-opening as to the marvels of Australasian geography.

"General," he said, "this stream seems to be increasing in size without any visible means of support, but it's flowing the wrong way to run into the Gulf of Carpentaria. Where on earth is it running to?"

"Madge, tell Mr. Maitland what becomes of this stream after it has become a goodly sized river," said Sir Donald.

"I'm sure Mr. Maitland doesn't require telling," returned Madge; "he knows so much more than I do about most things."

"If you had said that at the beginning of this trip," rejoined Maitland candidly, "I'd have agreed with you. Now it seems to me it's only the things that don't matter that I know. I seem to have missed the most interesting things—the things that directly concern the world I live in."

"But the fact that you've asked the question shows that you are improving," said Madge,

saucily. "But I think I'll leave the lecturing to you, uncle."

"Well, the truth is, Maitland," began the General, "one has to go back a few million years to find the explanation of why these rivers run into the interior. But that is a detail. If we were to go far enough, and at the proper season, we'd see mighty rivers flowing into the interior. But long before these rivers get there they divide and subdivide. Some of them have a trick of disappearing altogether, evidently into the earth, while others run underneath their own beds and never come to the surface again."

"Well, that's queer!" exclaimed Maitland, "I don't mean to say I've never heard of it before, but I didn't take it quite seriously. How do you account for it?"

"Australia was once cut by the sea into two great islands," was the reply. "The Gulf of Carpentaria in the north and Spenser's Gulf in the south were joined into a long narrow sea broken by a few islets. Than the whole land rose gradually and changed that narrow sea into low-lying sand plains with occasional ridges of hills. The result is that the central portion is lower than the coast, the whole area being shaped something like a saucer. The rivers running into that great shallow saucer, having no other outlet, disappear into the dry sandy soil, or feed some of the great lakes. Some, like Eyre, Sylvester, Amadens and others, appear and disappear according to the seasons. More than one explorer has called another explorer a—well, something very unparliamentary because he couldn't find a certain charted river or an alleged sheet of water where the other had located it."

"BILL SMITH. FARTHEST NORTH."

"It is all very fascinating," observed Maitland, addressing no one in particular. "Differential calculus is not in it compared to this."

All along the banks of the stream we encountered great piles of mussel shells, the remains of fires, and black fellows' camps innumerable. The remarkable thing was that we never caught sight of any black fellows themselves. To Sir Donald this fact seemed to be full of significance. "When an enemy lies low and doesn't show up occasionally," he remarked to

me, "you can be pretty certain he has something up his sleeve and is preparing a surprise."

The weather was now delightfully cool, it being mid-winter in the land of Topsy-Turvydom. That is to say, people who live in Australia would have considered it cool—to an old countryman it was delightful summer weather. As we advanced, the mountain range lay to our right front, while away to the left was rolling country as far as the eye could reach. Away out there somewhere explorers had solemnly averred there was a lake so large that it resembled the ocean, for one could not see to the other side, while again others declared they had followed by that identical route and could hardly find enough water in the native wells for their horses or camels. It surely was a weird and mysterious land.

We kept to the right and again entered the hilly country. We would soon be in the heart of the Never-Never Mountains. Ten days more and we were under their shadow, as they loomed up black and grim before us. Fantastically formed mountains are these, with vast frowning bastions, overlooked by domed summits, jagged crests, or spirelike pinnacles, a phantasmagoria of gigantic and startling effects. We skirted the base of this seemingly impenetrable land, looking for an opening. At length we saw a break in the range, and at the close of a long day's journey we camped on the banks of a creek within two miles of the frowning gateway referred to. It surely must lead into the mysterious inner land—the Mecca of our hopes!

It was Sunday morning, and as usual no one was very early astir. At least, we men folk thought so until we were awakened from our sense of security by a very startling discovery. It was Mrs. Bailey who sprang it on us. She came over to Sir Donald's tent and, calling to him, inquired if Madge were there, or if he had seen her lately.

"No," he called out, "isn't she with you? Surely she can't be far away. When did you see her last?"

"She got up two hours ago," was the reply. "She told me she was going to have a look at the great cliff from the outside. I thought she might have returned and gone to your tent."

"She hasn't been here," I heard Sir Donald declare. And then a moment after he cried in a loud voice for Bailey and myself.

In two minutes the whole camp was discussing Madge's disappearance. It was two hours at least since any one had seen her.

We fired a volley from our rifles, and breathlessly awaited a reply. But there was no acknowledgment—nothing save the echoes.

"Something must have happened to her," cried Sir Donald. "She is too good a bushwoman to lose herself. Doctor, and you Maitland, and you Jack, and Parker, get your horses at once. We'll take a black boy with us to track her. Bailey, you'll wait in camp and look after it while we're gone."

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CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE TRAIL.

WITHIN an hour, and after having lost the tracks of Madge's horse more than once owing to the rocky nature of the surface, we followed them to that great break in the high wall of cliff that rose up precipitously from the wooded plain.

Right into that mighty pass we rode where the cliffs rose sheer up without a break for several hundred feet over our heads. Madge had evidently steered clear of clumps of bushes and rocks behind which an enemy might lurk. Once Yarry, the black boy, stopped and, pointing with a forefinger to the ground, remarked:

"'Nother fellow track belonging to white fellow here; that one old, three, four days ago. He been lead-um yaraman, horse."

The tracks went into the stony bed of the creek that now stretched from cliff to cliff. The gorge took a turn, and then, all at once, a mighty valley with an inclined plane in the centre, the sides of which were also precipitous, burst upon our astonished gaze. It was as if we looked upon a vast, waterless, land-locked harbour, with a grass-clad island in the centre, one end of which rested on the plain, while the other rose gradually to a height of several hundred feet and then fell sheer away. It was as if the rock upon which the castle and old town of Edinburgh are built had risen up before us, grim and bare.

"Yarry," said Sir Donald, turning to the black boy, "quick, get back to camp at once, and tell Mr. Bailey to make the men hitch up both waggons and the spring cart, and come on here. Wait, I'll give you a note to take to him."

He drew a small note-book from a pouch in his belt and, scribbling a few lines, was about to hand them to Yarry, when his action was arrested by an exclamation from the aboriginal. The latter was gazing fixedly at a bare patch of ground that just showed through the trees some few hundred yards to the right. Only a black fellow could possibly have noticed it at all.

"What do you see there, Yarry?" demanded Sir Donald.

"White fellow bin diggum hole!" disgustedly replied the Son of the Bush, who had a supreme contempt for manual labour of any sort.

"Let's have a look before I give you the note," said Sir Donald.

We rode through a sparse undergrowth, struck a slight ridge, ascended it twenty or thirty yards, then stood still, gaping at what we saw, and at one another.

A great quartz reef had been laid bare, and some one had been working on it quite recently. It was at least twelve feet thick and of that rusty gap-toothed sort that even the comparatively uninitiated realise as being gold bearing. A pick lay on the ground; some loose specimens were scattered around, and white dust was sprinkled over a heap of mould, showing that a specimen of quartz had been recently dollied, or crushed.

"Prospectors! and they've found a jolly fine reef," exclaimed Sir Donald. "But off you go, Yarry; we can't stop now for all the gold in the world."

Sir Donald then took a whistle from his belt and blew a peculiarly ear-piercing note on it.

"If the people who own this claim are in the neighbourhood," he said, "they ought to hear that."

"Let's go up that hill," I said. "We'll be able to have a good look around, and, anyhow, Madge will have a much better chance of seeing us."

"Right, Payne," assented Sir Donald; "by skirting the edge of that rock we'll be able to command the valley. We'll fix on a camp at the same time. I hope there's water."

"I'm sure of it," I said. "I noticed a watercourse right down the centre. There's most likely a spring some little distance up."

We galloped through the lightly timbered valley to the foot of the rise, which here was not more than a hundred yards across. Down the centre of it ran a tiny watercourse, containing pools of clear water. The hill itself was richly grassed. We ascended it, and then by the aid of our field-glasses saw that the watercourse seemed to come down from the very summit.

"That's all right," said Sir Donald. "It will be comparatively easy for the waggons to go up there, and there's any amount of grass and water. This hill gains in breadth as it goes up. The horses will be all right for pasture. I'm glad I told Bailey in that note to go right up to the top. We shall be comparatively safe in case of attack. And now let's skirt the brink; we surely must be able to see something of Madge from this crag."

Only for the fact that we knew it would add to the already heavy burden of trouble and anxiety weighing on Sir Donald, I do not think any of us would have returned to camp that night without having found some trace of Madge. Her loss was an overwhelming blow to our party, and we only dismissed one wild theory regarding her incomprehensible disappearance to start another. Had she been a town-bred girl and unaccustomed to finding her way about in the Bush alone, we could have understood it, but she was a good bushwoman, and had a splendid head for locality.

We had ascended the great inclined plane until we were at an altitude of three or four hundred feet. Here it narrowed, only to open out again on an extensive circular plateau some three or four hundred acres in extent. On this we turned out the horses. We camped at the narrow neck, which was not more than a hundred yards or so across. On all sides save the one by which we had ascended, the approaches were either precipitous or so steep that it would have been more than risky to attempt scaling them. The waggons were placed behind some huge boulders. It was an ideal stronghold: a few men could hold it.

Sir Donald himself came in looking so tired and careworn that I almost feared to speak to him. I had made a large fire on the highest point of the plateau, so that it could be seen for miles round.

"Now that you're here, Taylor," I said, "I suppose you'll allow some of us to go out again. Maitland, Bailey, and I came in about half an hour ago. We've had supper, so we're quite ready to start."

"Just wait a minute, Payne," he replied, and the subdued sadness in his voice filled me with a great pity for him. "I've something to say to you. But first you can send out Jack, Bailey, and Martin, and tell them to look to their fire-arms. Let them follow the cliff to the left. Later we'll follow it round to the right. See that they've had a good supper first."

I did as he directed, and after he had eaten a few mouthfuls and drank a pannikin of tea, he spoke again.

"It's a mystery to me," he said, "where Madge can have got to. This valley can't be more than fifteen miles in circumference at most, and unless she found a way out, of course she must be in it."

"Something may have happened to her horse," I suggested; "and, perhaps, being in scrub, she can't see this rock."

"But there's the firing—she must have heard that."

"In a valley like this, forming a huge circle, I've just been wondering whether our firing so much, and at different points, may not have served to confuse and lead her aimlessly from one place to another. And as for the echoes—well, you can't fire a shot without hearing it repeated in two or three different places."

"That's very true, Payne. But put it to yourself—do you think that Madge is the sort of girl to get lost? Why, she can give the best of us points in bushmanship."

"She has a good horse, and her rifle, and none of our party could use either to better advantage in case of emergency than she," I added.

"You're thinking of the blacks," said Sir Donald, in a strange, hard voice. "But do you know, Payne, I've been thinking of something worse—bad as they are."

"You mean Hawker?" I said in a low voice.

"Yes," he said. "And now there is another bad feature in the case."

"What is it?" I asked.

"That gold reef we found to-day," he said. "You'll remember that when Jack stumbled across Hawker's camp and found Holt and Bird there, they tried to draw him as to what Smith was doing in these parts. They believed somehow or other that he was prospecting and had found a valuable gold-mine which we were going to help him to stake out and take up formally. Now I shouldn't be surprised if what we saw to-day was actually Smith's gold-mine. If so, and if certain members of our party see or hear of it, then, don't you see, the rest of us would only be in the way, and they'd endeavour to wipe us all out? But I must be off again, Payne. You'd better stay in charge of the camp and see that the fire's kept up. It will be a beacon for all of us who are out."

"I'm going with you—you may require me," I said. "But wait—here's Parker."

The trusty fellow, crunching his feet noisily on the gravel to attract our attention, came out of the dusk of the night and into the glow of the firelight.

"Well, Parker," said Sir Donald, "what is it?"

He told us he had seen Sam Holt and the others steal silently out of the camp.

"I have it," I said, "they have got wind of that reef somehow and they've gone to examine it. Let's follow them, and see what they're up to. It may be our chance."

"I never in my life liked watching people," remarked Sir Donald, "but in a case of this kind we've got to think of the safety of others as well as ourselves. Come on, I think I know the way."

In the fairly clear night we picked our way carefully in the direction of the ridge where we had seen the quartz reef. We made a *détour* in order to approach it from the opposite side, so that we should be able to peer over it while we ourselves were unseen.

In twenty minutes' time we were close to it, and with every sense on the alert we mounted the little timbered ridge. Treading as noiselessly as we could, and keeping well in the shadow, we cautiously ascended. Soon we could hear voices. Closer we crawled; the voices were distinct. Then, in a crouching position, we made for some sheltering rocks. Reaching these, we took off our hats and peered past a gap in the boulders.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COO-EE.

WITHIN a few yards of us, in the trench which disclosed the crown of the reef, sat Sam Holt, Bird and Brock, facing each other. A lantern burned under cover of the trench wall. Sam held a hammer in one hand while with the other he handled a piece of quartz lovingly, blowing on it to remove the dust and show up the precious metal plastered through it. The other two were also holding specimens to the light.

"Mates," Sam Holt was saying, "it's a reg'lar Bobby Dazzler, it is. It'll go a hundred ounces to the ton if it goes a pennyweight. Gewhizzy, but we'll make things hum!"

As he spoke he wheeled round and glared into a clump of wattle not more than a few paces away.

"Sam, Sam," cried Bird, "what is it—what's the matter with you?"

Sam mumbled incoherently, while his teeth chattered in his head as he pointed to the bushes, from which there slowly emerged a human head and face. It was Hawker! Keeping his eyes fixed upon them, he wriggled through the wattle-bush and came towards them.

"Hawker! Billie Hawker!" exclaimed Sam, "and it's in the land of the living ye are, after all, my boy! Well, Billie, if we did think as you were a goner, we are glad to see you agen!"

"You look it," said the outlaw, sneeringly.

I felt Sir Donald grip me by the arm. "Payne," he whispered, "don't you hear that?—a woman's coo-ee. That's the second time I've heard it."

Ignoring the desperadoes close at hand, I

listened, but all I could hear was the muffled cry of a morpoke, the rustle of the tree-tops, and the faint moan of the wind as it caught the edge of the cliff-top. Then, faintly sounding in a pause of the wind, faint and far away, but unmistakable, came a high, shrill, long-drawn-out "coo-ee." To the three of us on the top of the ridge it was audible enough, but by those talking below it was evidently unheard.

Sir Donald gripped me again by the arm.

"Crawl back out of this," he whispered. "We must let them alone just now. That's Madge. We must get to her first; we can deal with them later."

As expeditiously as we could we withdrew. In a few minutes we found ourselves skirting the base of the hill that led to our camp, and then we were suddenly challenged by some one in the shadow of a rock.

"Halt, who comes there?"

"It's Maitland, by Jove!" exclaimed Sir Donald, "and now I think of it, we didn't arrange for a countersign."

But the word FRIEND made matters right, and the next moment we found Maitland with his rifle in one hand and a coil of rope in the other.

"What is it?" asked Sir Donald anxiously.

"A woman's coo-ee," replied the tutor, "and I can see you've heard it, too. Mrs. Bailey insisted on my making a search. She has taken my place in camp. I fancy the voice comes from one of those terraces in the face of the cliff, so I brought this rope in case we might require it."

"You've done well, Maitland," exclaimed Sir Donald. "We'll go on together."

We did not hear the cry again, but we hurried on and struck the south cliff. Ere we rounded a bend we looked back and saw the great rock on which our camp was situated looming up under the wan, mysterious moonlight like a miniature Gibraltar. It was rough travelling, and tedious work threading the tortuous strips of thorny bush.

Gigantic pillar-like rocks rose up everywhere, as if a city of mighty temples had once stood upon that spot. Then the character of the cliff suddenly changed, and the formation took a horizontal and upward trend.

"I really don't think we ought to go farther just at present," said Sir Donald. "The coo-ees we heard could hardly have come from such a distance."

"Look at the grooving in the great sweep of this cliff," I said; "it's an improved sort of whispering gallery, only on a ten thousand times grander scale. Still, I think with you that the coo-ees we heard could not have travelled farther."

"You don't think, Payne, that we could have been mistaken, do you?" Sir Donald asked. "You don't think it was other than a white woman's coo-ee we heard?"

"It was very far away," I said, "but it was just as I've heard Madge give it at times. I think we're far enough now from Hawker and Company to venture a coo-ee or two on our own account."

But no replies came to our cries, nor did we gain anything save bruised shins and torn clothes, up to the time that the dawnlight came stealing over the high cliffs. A thin mist rising from the dew-damp ground drifted down the valley, wreathing the gaunt boles of giant trees with finest lawn, and sagging fantastically from limb to spray.

We cut across the great natural arena to explore a recess in the side of a cliff that we thought might have escaped notice. After infinite labour, we succeeded in working our way through a dense thicket and reached the bed of a dry watercourse which skirted the base of the cliff. In this we found fresh horse tracks. We followed them to where at the foot of a terrace we saw that a horse had stood. Here on a patch of sand we found the tracks of a man and woman; the latter were Madge's tracks beyond doubt.

Up a dangerous narrow terrace we passed with beating hearts, and then we came to a gap recently made with a pick which we found leaning against the cliff. The gap was an effective bar to our further advance. Maitland was in the lead.

"Steady yourselves against the cliff," he said. "If you'll let me have that rope, Doctor, I'll take it with me. I've no doubt I'll get across that gap."

It looked a mad feat, for a slip meant certain death.

"Even if we tied you to us, Maitland," I said, "it would be quite impossible to hold you in the event of a slip.'

"I don't intend to tie myself to you," he replied. "I'm taking the risks in this business. And we mustn't make more noise than we can help. If there is some one with her, we should stand a poor show if caught on this sparrow's perch. Pass me the pick. I only hope no one will hear."

We could hardly believe it was the hitherto diffident and apparently timid tutor who spoke. There was now determination in his every word and action, and he was cool as a cucumber.

He took off his boots, and, leaning forward over the ledge, began to make a foothold for himself.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN HAWKER'S CLUTCH.

WHEN Madge rode out of camp, as she lightly put it, to "have a look round," she was unmindful of the concern she might cause others; for years she had roamed the bush without mishap and there was no suggestion of danger in what she did now. She would be back in lots of time for breakfast.

She followed up the stony bed of the creek. What a weird world was this great valley with its precipitous sides from which jutted gargoyles and griffins in weather-beaten rock and nodding plumes of ferns and palms! She left the main creek to enter a tributary, almost hidden by dense foliage, which swung round to the left, hugging the cliff. What a dense and perfect natural arbour, and would it ever come to an end!

Out into the sunlight again, she saw that the great island-like plateau just within the gorge was left behind and that she must have made a very near cut in her progress into this fascinating valley. On, still on, and the pillar-like isolated rocks and the plants and living things that met her wondering gaze caused her to forget time.

And now the miniature terrace that led from the valley upwards into that mysterious land above attracted her. One ledge in particular excited her curiosity. What harm if she left her horse at the foot and followed it up to explore!

Two minutes later she was following it up on foot, and the trees and rocks below were becoming dwarfed in a significant fashion. But it was not all plain walking or even climbing. That ledge had an awkward trick of narrowing, and once when she had stepped somewhat too near the edge, a piece of rotten sandstone broke away and disappeared into the depths

A HAND CLOSED ON HER REVOLVER AND WRENCHED IT FROM HER GRASP.

beneath. What was it within her that impelled her to climb like a cat when she ought certainly to have turned back? Descending might be a very different thing. There were honeycombed passages everywhere. Into one of these she passed. It turned and led out on to another ledge. There were the embers of a fire here and the belongings of a white man strewed around, and a voice that made her jump and wheel round hailed her.

In a moment she recognised the shock-headed man. It was the desperado, Hawker.

"Good morning, Miss!" he said grimly. "And so you're comed to call on Billie, have you!"

Was ever girl in such an appalling fix as that in which Madge now found herself! Facing her, and with his back to the only point of egress, was one of the most desperate outlaws on the continent of Australia.

"Good morning!" he repeated. "Enjoying the view from my balc'ny?"

He motioned with his hand towards the blue space that yawned on one side. Madge stole a glance and shivered again. No hope there.

She found her voice, but her heart beat painfully. When she had last seen this man, he was lying apparently lifeless on the ground, the victim of her manipulation with the box of ammunition. The tables were turned now with a vengeance.

"Good morning!" she responded mechanically.

He rubbed his chin, and his gaze wandered again. He appeared unable to make up his mind about something, and yet, of late years, he had never hesitated to shoot on sight.

"Had breakfast?" he asked irrelevantly.

"Not yet," she replied; "but I rather fancy the cook at our camp will be blessing me by this time. I think I'd better say good-morning and get back the way I came."

"You don't ask who I am and what I'm doing here," he observed, "an' by that I fancies you don't require an interduction."

"It's hardly town manners to start a conversation without being properly introduced," rejoined Madge, ignoring his indirect demand for information, "but under the circumstances I certainly think I owe you an apology for intruding."

Hawker ran his crooked fingers through his hair, and then something that remotely resembled a human cackle came brokenly from his throat.

"You *are* a daisy; blow me if you ain't!" he declared.

The girl took heart somewhat. Some vague sense of humour had evidently survived the man's general moral dilapidation, and it might be possible to temporise.

"Do you really think you could give me breakfast?" she asked. "I'm afraid you're one of those sort of people who implore callers to stay, and are all the time hoping to goodness they'll go."

He chuckled grimly.

"Will ye light that fire while I go for a billy of water?" he asked awkwardly. "I'll take you at yer word an' give you a drink of tea."

Madge smilingly hastened to obey.

"And, mind," said Hawker warningly, looking back over his shoulder, "there's only one road out of this here show, an' that's the way I'm going. If you take that road—" he pointed to the gallery at the back—"you'll fall four hundred feet."

Next moment Madge was alone. Here was a situation with a vengeance! She was going to kindle the notorious Hawker's fire in his own spider's parlour in order to breakfast with him! She peered over the edge of the terrace, but the yawning abyss was sickening. She ran some twenty yards or so into the far end of the tunnel, which was much larger than she had at first imagined, but the darkness and a rush of cold air suggested some hidden terror and forced her to retreat.

She remembered the revolver on her belt. In another moment she had made up her mind, and, cocking the weapon, she stole swiftly and noiselessly after the desperado.

She rounded a dim corner of the gallery. A shadow close to her materialised. A hand closed on the revolver and wrenched it from her grasp. There was a harsh laugh and Hawker exclaimed—

"Tut, tut! Just like the rest o' them, only more so! Goin' to shoot her own William! an' just as he was a-goin' to git the water to boil the billy for their first breakfast together!"

In the semi-twilight she could see grim amusement on his oddly wrinkled face, but its callousness struck terror into her heart.

His manner was so masterly, she had not a word to say, and, like a child detected red-handed in some fault, she went back to the eyrie-like abode of the outlaw.

(To be concluded.)

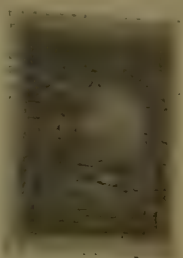
THE STAMPS OF NEWFOUNDLAND

LAST month we dealt with the earlier stamps of Newfoundland, and this month we take up the continuation of the story with the issue of 1897, which was made to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of Newfoundland by Jean Cabot, and the sixtieth year of Queen Victoria's reign.

1897.—Fourteen values. Designs: various scenes illustrative of the history and commercial ndustry of the colony.

1c. *green*—a portrait of Queen Victoria in widow's weeds. Number printed, 400,000.

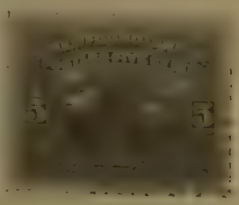
2c. *carmine*—a portrait of Jean Cabot, the discoverer of Newfoundland. Number printed, 400,000.



3c. *ultramarine*—a view of Cape Bonavista, the landfall of Cabot, a rugged headland on the west coast of the colony. Number printed, 1,000,000.

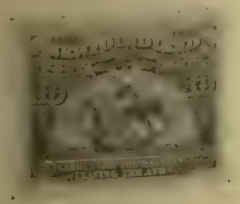
4c. *grey-green*—caribou hunting, a favourite sport in the colony. Number printed, 400,000.

5c., *purple*—two miners at work, representing one of the resources of the colony. Number printed, 400,000.



6c., *red-brown*—Logging timber, another of the colony's resources. Number printed, 400,000.

8c., *orange*—Boats fishing, representative of the fishing industry. Number printed, 200,000.



10c. *sepia*—Cabot's ship, the *Matthew*, leaving the Avon on a roving commission, which led to the discovery of Newfoundland. Number printed, 200,000.

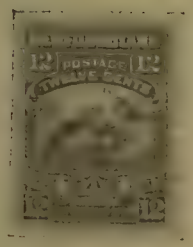
12c. *deep blue*—Ptarmigan, a sport of the colony. Number printed, 200,000.

15c., *vermilion*—a colony of seals, representing a great source of revenue. Number printed, 200,000.

24c., *violet*—Salmon fishing, a Newfoundland sport. Number printed, 100,000.

30c., *black-blue*—a reproduction of the great seal of the colony, in which a fisherman is depicted bringing gifts to Britannia. Number printed, 100,000.

35c., *brick-red*—a bit of coast scenery



showing an iceberg off St. John's. Number printed, 100,000.

60c., *black*—portrait of Henry VII., who gave Cabot his charter to roam the seas and annex any land he came across for England. Number printed, 100,000.

This series was issued on June 24, 1897, the stamps then in use being called in and replaced by this commemorative set. After the numbers given were printed, the die plates, &c., were certified to have been destroyed. At the time the issue was generally condemned as being made for the purely speculative purpose of collecting much needed revenue from stamp collectors. It was designed, engraved and printed by the American Bank-note Co., of New York.

Perf. 12.

	Unused. s.	d.		Used. s.	d.
1c., green	0	4	..	0	4
2c., carmine	0	4	..	0	4
3c., ultramarine	0	5	..	0	3
4c., grey-green	0	4	..	0	4
5c., purple	0	5	..	0	4
6c., red-brown	0	5	..	0	4
8c., orange	0	6	..	0	6
10c., sepia	0	7	..	0	7
12c., deep blue	0	8	..	0	8
15c., vermilion	0	10	..	0	10
24c., violet	1	4	..	1	4
[illegible], ultramarine	1	8	..		-
35c., brick-red	2	0	..	2	0
60c., black	3	3	..		—

1897.—*Provisional.* One value; owing to a run on the 1 cent stamps some 400 hundred sheets of the 3 cents of 1890 were surcharged with the words "one cent" in one line, in black. Specialists recognise three varieties of type in this surcharge, which I illustrate in order that my friends of THE CAPTAIN may be able to spot the rare type III. should they come across it, for this rare type is catalogued at 60s. The stamps are stated to have been printed in half-sheets of 50, of which all except the bottom row were of type I, eight of the remainder of type II, and two only of type III. The numbers printed of each variety work out;

Type I., number printed $80 \times 400 = 32{,}000$.
„ II. „ „ $16 \times 400 = 6{,}400$.
„ III. „ „ $4 \times 400 = 1{,}600$.

Total number printed $100 \times 400 = 40{,}000$.

Surcharged "One cent."

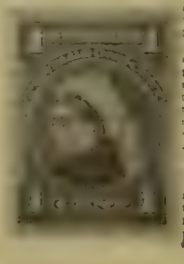
Type I.

Type II.

Type III.

	Unused. s.	d.		Used. s.	d.
"One Cent" on 3c. dull purple, type I.	2	6	..		-
"One Cent" on 3c. dull purple, type II.	7	6	..		-
"One Cent" on 3c. dull purple, type III.	60	0	..		-

1897-1901.—Six values. Designs: portraits of our royal family. The 1 cent underwent a change of colour from carmine to green, and the 2 cents was changed from orange to vermilion. These stamps, as before, were designed, engraved and printed by the American Bank-



note Co., of New York, and like all Newfoundland issues are of attractive designs. Our catalogues label the portraits with their titles at the time of issue, and I follow suit, but it will be noted that the then Prince and Princess of Wales have since become King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra, and that the Duke and Duchess of York have become Prince and Princess of Wales.

Perf.

	Unused.		Used.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
½c., slate-green	0	1	0	1
1c., carmine	0	3	0	3
1c., green	0	1	0	1
2c., orange	0	6	0	8
2c., vermilion	0	2	0	1
3c., orange	0	3	0	1
4c., violet	0	4	0	3
5c., blue				

Notable New Issues.

There have been several notable new issues of late, which demand notice in the pages of THE CAPTAIN; in fact, we have been rather neglecting new issues in favour of other philatelic matter; and, after all, new issues are the life and soul of stamp-collecting, and must not be shelved. Some collectors pretend that new issues are beneath their notice, but the wise collector keeps his collection up to date and secures all new issues of his favourite country as they come out. Those who have not done so will have to pay through the nose for some of them; for instance, the Lagos king's head, single CA, 10s., which was recently on sale at a fraction over face value, now fetches £10 at the stamp auctions. The Southern Nigeria king's head, single CA, has also ranged high, from £4 10s. to £10.

Australians are still muddling along with hand-to-mouth issues that require continual watching. The latest development is the decision of Western Australia to withdraw from the Commonwealth; and as if to emphasise that decision, its stamps, which have been coming out on the new Commonwealth paper water-marked Crown A, have suddenly gone back with a 6*d.* value to the "W. Crown A" paper. It is said that this is from an old unissued stock; but even so it is a curious coincidence.

Norway has not yet given us its promised new issue that is to mark with a portrait of its own king its separate nationality. Denmark has also a new king and a consequent new king's portrait to replace the old king's, but it is said that the stock of the old king's portrait stamps is large and that the new king's portrait will be introduced as the various values are exhausted. Brazil is coming out with a new set of the pictorial kind, which, it is said, is to be a very fine one, designed and engraved by the American Bank-note Co., of New York. Then, finally, we may have a new set of U.S.A. stamps, as the contract for printing is to change hands at an early date. The Government Bureau of Printing and Engraving, which has been printing the stamps for some years, has been outbid by the American Bank-note Co. From Egypt we have a new value, 4 milliemes, of similar type to the current series, but with the background cleared away so as to throw up the pyramid, and it now becomes a question whether the other values will be similarly improved.

Brunei.—Here is quite a new Crown Colony for any one who wants to start *de novo*. The Sultan of Brunei was at one time the sole master of the whole island of Borneo; then came troubles, and slice after slice of his fine territory was lost to him, till at last, with just 8000 out of 284,630 square miles, he (in 1888) placed himself and his territory under British protection. About a year ago the country was converted into a Crown Colony, and now we have a series of postage stamps for this new Crown Colony of the British Empire. This first issue has been provided by overprinting the discarded and last-issued stamps of Labuan with the word "Brunei."

Stamps of Labuan overprinted "Brunei."

Perf.

1c., black and violet.
2c. on 3c., black and brown.
3c., black and brown.
8c., black and vermilion.

Egypt.—A new value, 4 milliemes, has been added to the current series. This new value has been provided mainly for use on postcards. It is of the same type as the current 5 milliemes, but collectors of Egyptians will note that in this new stamp the shading in the background of the pyramid has been completely cleared away on the left. This may also indicate a similar improvement of the other values as new plates are required, for it certainly throws up the pyramid into bolder relief.

Wmk. crescent and star. Perf. 14.

4 milliemes, deep carmine.

France.—This country is at last settling down to a very pretty and effective design which apparently is to be gradually adopted for most, if not all, values, and this new design is known as the Sower type. Since the design was first introduced in 1903 there have been sundry interesting redrawings, which my friends who go in specially for French issues should look up. We illustrate the design and give the list up to date with catalogue prices.

Perf.

	Unused. s.	d.	Used. s.	d.
10c., rose-carmine	0	2	0	1
15c., slate-green	0	2	0	1
20c., brown-purple	0	3	0	1
25c., blue	0	4	0	1
30c., lilac	0	5	0	1
35c., violet	0	0		

India.—A new series is in course of preparation which will make the stamps available for fiscal as well as for postal purposes by the addition of the word "revenue" after the word "postage" on each stamp. The designs, I gather, will not be otherwise changed. The half anna, which we illustrate, is the first value to hand of the new set.

"Postage and Revenue" Series.

Wmk. star. Perf. 14.

½ anna, green.

Jamaica.—This colony has been making a few experiments in stamp production, the latest being a modification of arms design and a return to printing each value in one colour only. As Jamaica is an interesting little country from the stamp collector's point of view, it may be as well to recapitulate and bring its issues up to date, so that my readers may see at a glance how matters stand in regard to this arms series. Here, then, is the list up to date, with the latest catalogue prices attached.

1903-4.

Wmk. Crown CA single. Perf. 14.

	Unused. s.	d.	Used. s.	d.
½d., green, centre black	0	2	0	1
1d., carmine, centre black	0	4	0	1
2½d., ultramarine, centre black	0	4	—	
5d., yellow, centre black	0	7	1	0

1905

Wmk. multiple CA. Perf. 14.

	Unused. s.	d.	Used.
½d., green, centre black	0	1	—
1d., carmine, centre black	0	2	—
5s., black, centre violet	6	6	—

1906.

Wmk. multiple CA. Perf 14.

1d., carmine.

In addition to the 1d. of the new design and single colour, I learn from a correspondent in the colony, the 5s. in the new design is also ready for issue, so that the 5s. bicoloured stamp may very possibly turn out to be a scarce stamp. Anyway, this arms series promises to be a very interesting one, and should not be neglected at present catalogue prices.

Luxembourg.—We have received the first of a new portrait series, as illustrated. The new portrait is a full face presentation of the reigning Grand Duke Wilhelm, who succeeded to the dukedom in November 1905.

New Portrait Series.

Perf.

10c., carmine.

Western Australia.—A surprise packet has come from this colony in the shape of a 6d. value of a design similar to the current 2½d., but watermarked with the old watermark of W. Crown A.

Wmk. W. Crown A. Perf. 14.

6d., violet.

South Australia.—This colony is still ringing the changes on its long rectangular plasters. The stamps are being printed on Crown A paper with the word "Postage" in bolder type—which we illustrate. So far the list stands as follows:

Wmk. Crown A. Perf.

3*d.*, olive-green.
4*d.*, orange-red.
9*d.*, brown lake.
1*s.*, brown.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

N. E. S. C. (Bucks).—I am afraid I cannot give you the name of the designers of your English and Colonial stamps, further than to say that they are mostly designed and engraved by the firm of Messrs. De La Rue and Co. The name of the individual artist or workman in the employ of the firm who does the work is never given. The fullest catalogue is that of Stanley Gibbons, Ltd.

K. R. B. (Jamaica).—An exhaustive work on Panama stamps is published by the Scott Stamp and Coin Co., of 18, East 23rd Street, New York. The same firm have recently published a work on the Canal Zone stamps of Panama at 50c. Very many thanks for the new Jamaican stamp. I shall be very glad of information as to further developments. Are all the stamps to be printed in single colours, and will the arms design finally supersede the Queen's heads, some of which seem to be still current in the colony?

R. G. W. (Port Bannatyne).—Old black 1*d.* English used are catalogued at 6*d.* Specialist varieties of cancellation are not catalogued, and would depend so much upon condition, &c., that it would be useless my pretending to venture an opinion. The old 2*d.* blue, again, depends on variety of lines or no lines, which you do not give. There is no black 5*d.* Perhaps you mean the 5*d.* deep indigo of the 1880–1 series; that is catalogued at 7*s.* 6*d.* unused and 6*d.* used.

J. D. E. (London).—Your Transvaal 1*d.* king's head is the current stamp changed from a bi-coloured stamp to a single colour.

J. W. (Shincliffe).—I cannot tell you the price of the Tasmanians you inquire about without knowing whether they are imperf. or perf. and unused or used; but you will find these duly listed and priced in any good catalogue, such as Gibbons', Bright's or Whitfield King's.

N. V. T. (Transvaal).—Thanks for the postcard with a reproduction of a set of the last stamps of the late Republic. It looks very neat and effective. I have a similar card of Norwegian. Your postcard "without stamp, posted during the siege of Ladysmith with the words, 'Stamps unobtainable during the siege' printed in place of the stamp, and on the back a plan of the position the Boers occupied during the siege" is a most interesting souvenir, but has no philatelic status or value.

C. O'R. (Maritzburg).—Stanley Gibbons, Ltd. and I think other leading stamp firms publish an exchange list giving the rates at which they are prepared to do exchange business. You should write for these lists if you can get exchangeable stamps in quantities. Values not in general use are the best to offer. Glad to hear that my advice has been of use to you and that you are progressing.

GOOD ADVICE.

Down the far illustrious ages,
  In the glorious land of Greece,
One of those confounded sages
  Who disturb a schoolboy's peace,
Made a maxim great, that "caught on"—
"νεανίσκε, γνῶθι σαυτόν."

Greek's a fraud, and Greek is rotten,
  Greek, I grant you, is a bore:
(Not till *τυπτω* 's quite forgotten
  Will you wish you'd learnt some more!)
Yet—bestow a passing thought on
νεανίσκε, γνῶθι σαυτόν.

Now, this maxim—"Know thyself"—I
  Think, applies to you and me
As it did to youths in Delphi,
  Blazoned high where all could see.
This—the lore the Spartans fought on—
νεανίσκε, γνῶθι σαυτόν.

Don't go backing "gees" for "places";
  That's a foolish thing to do;
Lest the brutes who run the races
  Want less holding in than you;
Don't be lured by "sport" so risky—
γνῶθι σαυτόν, νεανίσκε.

"Know yourself"—know what you're made
  of,
  Know that habits seal your fate;
Know you mustn't be afraid of
  All the stress of going straight:
Be alive, but not too frisky—
γνῶθι σαυτόν, νεανίσκε.

ARTHUR STANLEY.

STORIES OF STOWAWAYS.

By ANDREW HENRY LOWE.

III.

IN HOLD NO. 4.

"I SAY, Jim, are ye sleeping?"

"No; I'm too cold for to sleep. Wot is it, Dick?"

"Wot d'ye say to stowing away?"

"I dunno wot ye mean. I wish I'd some grub to stow away. This is awful, so it is. I'm that 'ungry and mis'rable, I 'ope I may die afore morning."

"Keep up yer pecker, old chappie. I mean that we might stow away on some steamer going to America."

"And wot good would that do?"

"Why, it would mean grub for a week or so, and then we might tramp to the place of that uncle of mine wot has got a big farm and might give us a job. We can't be worse than we've been here, and they do say as how America is a place where there's plenty of work and lots to eat for everybody."

"And 'ow do ye do it? I dunno nothing about ships."

"Well, ye just finds out when the steamer's going to sail, and in good time ye gets on board and smuggles yerself away in some quiet corner where nobody'll see you; and then, when she's at sea, ye comes out and they sets ye to work, and ye gets yer grub and a blanket to sleep in."

"And 'ow d'ye know all that?"

"I know chaps as 'ave done it, both to America and back 'ome again."

"And they gives ye grub and something warm to sleep in?"

"Yes; that'll be all right so long as ye work at wot they wants ye to do, and keeps civil."

"And y're sure they gives ye grub—no bread and water racket?"

"Sure. Why, man alive, they've loads of grub they don't know wot to do with on them swell steamers, so they chucks it into the sea."

"Grub! loads of grub! If that's so, Dick, I'm on for it, sure. I'm fair tired of this starvation job, and can't stand it no longer. That's why I've been 'oping, some nights, I might die afore morning."

"We're not going to die yet a bit, Jim. Wait till we get to America, old dear. I've got an uncle out there somewhere, and if we can't find 'im, why we'll get a job and p'r'aps make a fortune in less than no time, and then won't we be 'appy and cut a dash—me and you as have always been chums and seen such 'ard times together?"

"A fortune, a fortune! I'm blest if I mind about a fortune, Dick, but I do want some decent grub. Them pains 'ave come back again."

"Cheer up, old son. I knows a ship as is sailing to-morrow night or the day after, and we'll try our luck on her. In the mornin' I'll persuade Billy Stiles to let's 'ave another bob. We'll 'ave a good tuck in, and then go for the steamer."

It was a broken-down shed in the yard of a small factory, not far from the Mersey, in Liverpool. An armful of straw, picked up here and there on the streets, had been scattered in a corner, and this partially protected the two young men from the chilly ground, while a couple of old sacks formed their only covering against the bitter night wind that blew through the gaps in the decaying structure.

Jim Ellis, aged nineteen, and Dick Maple, twenty-one, had been hard-working lads in a Sheffield factory, and, like so many others at this particular period of trade depression, had been thrown out of employment.

Chums and fellow-workers, they had left their neighbouring homes and gone on tramp, hoping to find something to do. But it was the same everywhere—numbers idle, and not even the humblest job to be found.

After much hardship they had reached Liverpool, where Dick sought out Billy Stiles, an old friend of his father's. But Billy, who had a marine store in a small way, was feeling the sting of the times, and was not at any time of a very generous nature. Having been befriended in past adversity by Dick's father—some time dead—he doled out a trifle to the hungry youths, indicating as he did so that he could do nothing more for them and that his "missus" would not want to see them at his home.

For a week they had wandered about the city, picking up a scanty bite of food, but not sufficient to stay the pangs of hunger, from which the lad Jim was now painfully suffering.

Fairly respectably brought up, they had a horror of the pauperising means of relief that are the only ones that our advanced civilisation has devised to meet the general industrial distress; and although naturally intelligent, they were ignorant of the ways of the world. Dick, the more robust of the two, was also the more optimistic.

They awakened shivering from their slumber in their miserable shelter, and crawled forth to face the raw winter's day. Jim could hardly walk.

For the relief of his chum, Dick boldly begged from the first person they met, a workman fortunate in a job.

"'Ere's all I've got," and he handed them three-halfpence.

This procured for each of them a small mug of cocoa and a morsel of bread, after which Jim felt better.

On the strength of their going to America and troubling him no further, Billy Stiles opened his heart to the extent of two shillings, and they had what they described as a "rare tuck in."

After much manœuvring they found themselves alongside the big steamer that was to haul out of dock in the morning. It was six o'clock, and the stevedores' gangs had stopped for tea. Darkness had set in, and the decks were almost deserted. The conditions were most favourable for carrying out their plan.

Creeping up an after cargo stage, they reached hatch No. 4. It was open right down to the hold, which, as well as the iron ladder leading down to it, was lit by lanterns.

At that moment a shrill whistle sounded and then a heavy footstep was heard coming in their direction. There was no time to be lost. They were about to be discovered.

"Down here, Jim, quick. I'll go first," and Dick led the way into the depths. They clambered over a number of packages till they came to a part where they could barely squeeze themselves between the cargo and the beams. Eventually, on the top of some large bales they found more room.

"We'll be safe here," said Dick. "They've finished at this part, I guess."

"Yes," replied Jim. "This is better and warmer than that shed last night."

By-and-by they heard the rattling of the winches, the dumping of goods, and the shouts of the labourers. Wearied after many days of tramping and scant rest at nights, and believing themselves all right at last—for a time, at any rate—they stretched themselves out on the not uncomfortable bales and fell into a heavy sleep.

When they awoke they found themselves in darkness; save for the throb, throb of the propeller and the creaking of the packages surrounding them, everything was still.

"She's off! she's out at sea," said Dick. "Come on, Jim, now's the time to get out and show ourselves."

They crawled in the direction of the hatch, and, after much groping, reached the ladder. But there was no opening above. The hatch was closed!

Dick mounted the ladder and pressed his hand against the hatch-board, but it was fast and would not yield to the exertion of all his strength.

It began to dawn upon the stowaways that they were prisoners, that means of exit to the upper deck were cut off, that they were practically entombed.

But Dick, ever hopeful, was not yet dismayed. Creeping about, he at last came upon an opening, and for a moment a thrill of gladness stirred his mind, only to be quelled, however, by the discovery that he was looking up a long, long shaft, lit from above by a glimmer of daylight. In the course of a persevering search, he found several such shafts, all equally lengthy. Only one of these ventilators was within reach from the top of the cargo, and up this he tried to wriggle himself, but the surface was slippery and afforded no hold, and he fell with a thump every time he attempted to climb, after painfully ascending a few feet.

"I'm afraid we're done for, Jim," he said in a tone he tried to make cheerful. "But let's keep up our chins, old dear. They'll be coming down by-and-by, and then it'll be all right."

"I'm precious hungry," said Jim, dolefully, "and I'd like a drink of water."

"Let's go back and rest a bit, and have a go at the tucker we've brought. As for water, I don't know as 'ow we're going to get hold of any in this place."

With the balance of Billy Stiles's two shillings they had purchased some bread and beef, about sufficient to make a meal for each. This they now divided into three parts, sharing one and reserving the other two. But, long insufficiently nourished and possessing voracious appetites, the scanty portion only served to whet their cravings.

CREEPING UP A CARGO STAGE, THEY REACHED HATCH NO. 4.

They again fell into sleep and blessed forgetfulness, and again awoke to a dreary sense of their gloomy situation.

Now commenced a terrible time! Their food being soon consumed, hunger gnawed at their vitals, and burning thirst parched their mouths and throats. The thought that they were imprisoned, that they might perish before being discovered, weighed upon them like a hideous nightmare. And to think, too, that they were so near to life and light, and food and water—that so many people were close at hand who would be glad to come to their aid—if they only knew! This thought maddened them and roused them at times to a perfect frenzy of hope and despair.

The darkness, the heavy darkness, how it oppressed them! Their only relief was to peer up the long shafts, which eased their aching eyes and stimulated the flickering hope in their hearts. They had no means of noting how the time passed. Dick knew that it took from eight to twelve days to cross to America, and he and Jim debated as to whether it was possible to live for such a time, in the event of the hold not being opened before port was reached.

Each took off a well-worn boot, and hour after hour they kept rapping with the heels against the hatch-board within reach, and also against the ventilator. While strength lasted, this was their constant employment during their waking hours. But no response came.

They shouted up the ventilator till they were voiceless and exhausted, but there was no ear within reach to catch their wailing appeals.

Food, food! Water, water! If they could only burst the barriers that withheld them from food and water!

They discovered, with some gladness, that there was a slight moisture on the beams and plates above their heads, and with a measure of relief they eagerly licked it. But food, food! What were they to do for food? Hunger racked them with frightful pangs.

At length they became too weak to put forth further effort. They could only lie mute and helpless. To add to the horror of their dismal plight, there seemed to be a very plague of rats in the place. Rats in their hundreds scampered about them, and became bolder and more numerous as the stowaways grew less capable of movement. The creatures ran over their bodies and their faces, squealing, leaping, and fighting. Jim was awakened once by a sharp bite in the lobe of his ear.

Whenever they lay still for any time and ceased to rap with their boots on the beams or boxes, the rodents, with loud squeakings, came on in armies, and indulged in what seemed to Jim and Dick like a war-dance on their prostrate, weary forms.

Realising that consciousness might leave them at any time, and that if the hold were entered after this took place but before death, their only chance was to be at once within sight, they groped their way to the ladder and lay down in a spot right under the hatch. It was not so comfortable or warm here as on top of the bales. All sizes of boxes were heaped about, but there was nothing soft on which they could recline. But, when they made this shift, they were fast becoming indifferent to everything save the presence of the rats.

"Jim, old dear, 'ow d'ye feel?" Dick's voice was faint, but there was still a slight ring of hopefulness in it.

"I ain't so bad now, Dick. I feels kind of sleepy and as if I didn't care—if them blooming rats wasn't about. 'Ow I hate them!"

"I dunno 'ow this is going to turn out, Jim; but wot I wants to say is, that it's all my blamed fault. 'Twas me as planned we should stow away, and 'twas me as hit on hiding in this blooming hole."

"Never mind, Dick, old chappie. You did it for the best, and ye often saved me from starvation ashore. I say, Dick, suppose we was to die down here, d'ye think as what folks say of the next world be true?"

"I ain't got no doubt of it, Jim. But p'r'aps we ain't done with this world yet."

"Well, I dunno, Dick. Seems to me I don't care whether we get to America or not, and that I'd as soon get out of this world now, if wot they says of the next be correct. To my mind this ain't no world at all for a poor fellow to live in, where one man gets everything he sets his eyes on, and another don't get a chance even to work for his bread."

"Ay, it do seem strange, Dick, and I can't make it out. Mother used to say that folks couldn't possibly understand it, but it would be all made clear and come right in the end, and wot we had to do was to hope and have faith."

These were the last words they uttered down in No. 4 hold of the ss. *Calypso*. The propeller throbbed, the rats scampered to and fro, and the stowaways lapsed into silence and, later, a deadly stupor.

"Mr. Purser, we were thinking that we might have a concert to-morrow evening. What do you say? I've been round looking for talent, and I find that we can make up a very good programme."

"All right. Let me have the names and items, and I'll get a programme 'jellio-graphed.'"

"And, I say, Mr. Purser, do you think it possible for Mrs. Granby's trunk to be fetched from the hold? Her guitar and music are packed in it."

"I'm afraid not, Mr. Simpson. You see, there's such a pile of baggage, and it might be hard to get at it. I fear the officers would object, as it is no part of their duty to turn the baggage over during the voyage."

"Ah! I'm sorry. It's a pity, but can't be helped. I promised to ask you. I'll go off and get the names."

"Mr. Purser. I've a favour to ask you." It was Mr. Hammond, a member of the Nova Scotia legislature.

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?"

"They're getting up a concert for to-morrow evening, and Mrs. Granby, with whom I am acquainted, has agreed to appear, provided she can procure her guitar. She is a magnificent singer, the finest amateur I've ever heard. She is sure to be the feature of the evening. However, she has her fad, and won't sing to a pianoforte accompaniment, but must have her guitar. Every one is anxious to hear her, and we should regard it as a great favour if her trunk, which contains the guitar, could be brought up."

"I'll speak to the chief officer, Mr. Hammond, and see what can be done. As a rule, they don't care about disturbing the baggage at sea, and it might be a long and difficult job finding Mrs. Granby's trunk."

"Thanks very much. Give the Chief Officer my compliments, and say that I shall take it as a personal favour if it can be managed."

THEY LAY DOWN IN A SPOT RIGHT UNDER THE HATCH.

"All right," said the Chief, when approached. "I'll send the Third and a hand or two down; but if it isn't near the top we can't afford the time to turn such a pile over. . . . You've baggage in No. 4 and No. 5, haven't you?" he said, later, to the Third.

"Yes."

"Well, get a description of the trunk and take a look at the top tiers, starting at No. 4."

Growling over the job, the Third went off to obey orders.

"Merciful heavens! What's this?" cried the carpenter when the third deck hatches of No. 4 hold were removed and the stream of bright daylight revealed two apparently lifeless forms.

The Third Officer and the four sailors gazed down astounded.

"They're quite dead," said the carpenter, when they got down to the prostrate youths.

The still bodies were quicky removed to the upper regions and carried to the ship's hospital.

The strange news went round the ship like lightning: *Two stowaways found dead on top of the baggage in No. 4 lower hold!*

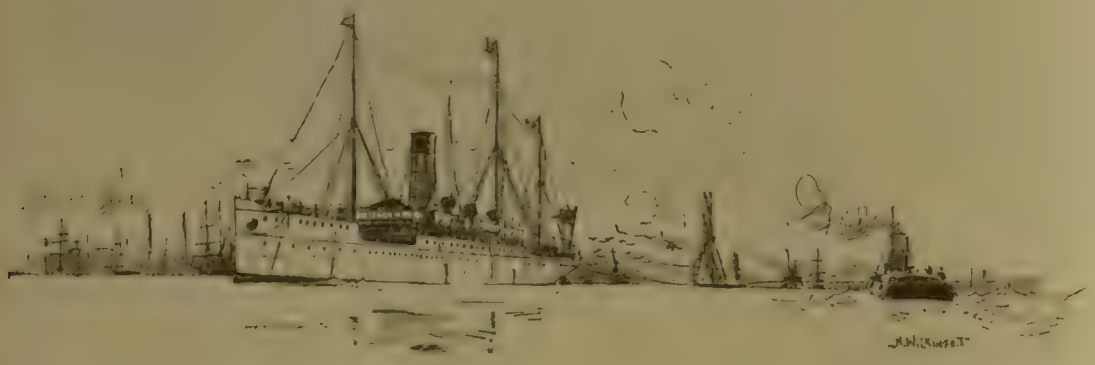
Dead! dead! two young fellows—quite young—dead! What a time they must have had down there without food or water, all these seven awful days! What sufferings of body and mind! How strange that the guitar incident should have led to the discovery! How long had they been dead? What a pity that the concert had not been thought of sooner!

But they were not dead, although very nearly so.

Under the great care bestowed upon them by the ship's surgeon and two female passengers from the steerage who volunteered as nurses, they slowly rallied, to the joy of all on board, and were able to be out on deck—well clad in the warm garments heaped upon them by gratified passengers—before the ship reached port. Their faces, of course, bore traces of the dreadful sufferings they had endured, but there was also about them that attractive *something* that suffering and a perilous nearness to the Unseen World, often leave behind.

On the *Calypso's* arrival on the other side, a wealthy "Dime Museum" man arranged with the authorities for Jim and Dick to be allowed entrance into the country, and they were the leading attraction at his show for a couple of weeks, bringing him in quite a "pot of money," as he admitted. Their remuneration, together with the proceeds of a subscription raised on the ship, enabled them to send back substantial aid to their relatives in England, and, in due time, to reach the farm, a thousand miles west, owned by Dick's uncle.

But they did not require to tramp there. And Dick would often say to Jim, and Jim would often say to Dick: "I say, old dear, doesn't water taste sweet?"



In an Indian "Compound".

By H. Hervey.

Illustrated by EDGAR A. HOLLOWAY.

OUR bungalow is large and lofty, so much so that we four could swing cats all at one time—even in the bathrooms. The "compound" (grounds) too is ample, having many large trees, with plenty of space for tennis courts, Badminton courts, and gardens of both kinds. There is no lack of life in this territory of ours. The whole place teems with birds, small beasts and insects.

We had not been in the bungalow a day or so before we fitted ourselves out with a young monkey. We have christened her Angelina. In addition to a full *répertoire* of the usual monkey tricks, Angelina diverts us in other ways. Her staple food hitherto appears to have been rice and *poochies*, or insects, for she does not yet take kindly to anything else. However, the other day I handed her an over-ripe plantain, and stood by to watch. She peeled the fruit—just as you or I would, and in the process got her fingers smeared with the juice. This she didn't like, so she set to to rid herself of the stuff by rubbing her hands on the grass in a grotesquely human fashion. Anon, she thought she would have a fling at the plantain; biting it without touching it with her paws, and eating only part of it. The daintiness of the little beast!

You have heard—perhaps read—of the Indian crow. Well, he grows here to perfection. He is a disreputable-looking fellow, and cunningness and roguery personified. He is an arrant thief, and I believe him to be as great a liar. He owns a distressingly irritating, raucous voice—compared to which the croak of your raven is delightful music. So disturbed was I by the incessant "caw-caw" on the trees close to the bungalow, and so futile were all attempts to drive off the birds, that I offered a reward for the capture of a single specimen, intending to keep him in well-fed durance, as a warning to his fellows. My people managed to nab a crow for me—how, I cannot say—a desperate villain that snapped savagely one moment, and the next played 'possum, pretending to be dead. I had him tied by the leg to a tree outside my window; but alas! this did not improve matters, for when his plight became manifest to his kindred they assembled in hundreds and cawed their indignation so noisily and persistently that I was driven nearly wild by the din. As stone-throwing failed to disperse the gathering, and we were at our wits' end what to do, the cook suggested a remedy. I at once asked him to put it to the test. Whereupon he chased and caught a fowl, which he did not release till he had plucked a feather from its wing.

"What are you going to do with that?" I asked.

He explained; and, though his plan seemed a little cruel, I reflected that we had to get rid of the crow nuisance, and that stern measures must be adopted. Taking our captive out of its cage, the *chef* threaded its nostrils with the feather, and then let it go. The effect was startling. In an incredibly short space of time not a crow could be seen, and ever since they have kept at a very respectful distance. Not so, however, he of the feather, who now

"WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THAT?"

regards this house as his legitimate hunting-ground, having been ostracised by his tribe on account of that feather sticking out of his ugly beak. Anyhow, he prefers us, for he is omnipresent, perching on the trees, the verandah eaves, and the tops of the open jalousies, whence he caws malignantly at me as much as to say, "You won't get rid of *me* in a hurry, my boy! I shall take the change out of you for this feather!"

We have a small army of squirrels round here—pretty, grey little beggars, though veritable limbs of mischief. They hunt in couples, a certain number of pairs occupying each tree. Two inhabit a small tree near the front verandah. They haunt that portion of the house, sprinting along the balustrade, scaling the standing jalousies, and reaching the flat roof almost before the eye can wink. I have often tried to intercept this pair with a view to destroying them, as they gnaw off the tape binding of the reed blinds and get into the side storeroom, where they play havoc amongst the provisions, but I have never yet succeeded. I have assured myself of their both being in the tree, and bamboo in hand have hidden behind one of the pillars, purposing to whack them as they flit past. Well, while one flips amid the branches the other cautiously slithers down the trunk to the ground, sits up, has a look round, jerks his tail, and advances. Seeing the coast clear, he repeats the performance till he spots me. Then he scurries back, scampers up the tree, and rejoins his mate, and the two unite in a shrill pæan of congratulation at having detected and outwitted the enemy, though I have not stirred an inch!

Curiously enough, I have a feathered ally against the squirrels—a small, black, swallow-tailed bird of about the size of a thrush. I am not ornithologist enough to describe him more lucidly. When the milkman's cows are grazing in the compound, he perches on the back of one of them, ready to fly down and snap up the grasshoppers which the animal disturbs in the process of browsing. But when the cows are not round, and I am squirrel-hunting, one of these birds is safe to be handy. As soon as a rodent quits the shelter of a tree, down plumps that bird straight at the little beast—but the movements of both are too swift for me to determine what happens. I should like to put a specimen of each in a cage, and let them fight it out.

The windows of our house are stoutly barred with iron, as a precaution against the base two-legged thief. At intervals of, say, an hour, a squirrel swarms up the bars of my room window in the east wing, gains the weather-board, and so mounts to the roof, taking the same route in reverse on the return journey. Determined to fathom the mystery, last week I put on my hat, and standing under a big banyan I watched. Sure enough, after a little space my friend appeared making a bold dash from a neighbouring tree, and eluding the swallow-tail, scrambled on to my sill, scaled the window-bars, and was soon on the house-top. I kept my eyes open, and soon spotted the squirrel at the opposite end of my room roof. Close by stands a berry-bearing tree. There are always some of the servants about that tree, for the scullery-pantry gives on to it, and the path to the kitchen leads past it. The squirrel was evidently aware of these facts; nevertheless, he threw himself from the coping, and with a grand swing swished into the foliage, where I caught occasional glimpses of him—busy with the berries. When he had filled himself out, he clambered to a top branch, shot across to my roof, and finally regained his tree. As already hinted, that berry-bearing tree was difficult of access to most squirrels, but my little friend had hit upon a safe though circuitous way to reach it and enjoy the monopoly of the fruit. And yet there are people who say that the lower animals are wanting in the power of reasoning!

When Angelina, the monkey, first came,

BAMBOO IN HAND, I HAVE HIDDEN.

the tree I tethered her to was already in the occupancy of some squirrels, and soon there were ructions between the little denizens and the captive, for that tree does not stand sufficiently near other trees to which the rodents can spring, and so command a clear way to the ground. On finding their descent cut off they squeaked their disappoval, hurling their remonstrances at Angelina, who paid no heed to them, nor attempted to follow them. By evening the squirrels had so far regained their equanimity as to jump off the trunk at a safe altitude, and land on the ground beyond the scope of the monkey's chain. It was highly amusing to observe their manœuvres, but I did not dream of the treat in store for me. One day, I suddenly noticed a more than usual activity on the part of the buck squirrel living in Angelina's tree. His mate no longer accompanied him, but his attitude towards the captive below was more aggressive than usual. Of course I understood it all when two baby squirrels appeared, accompanied by the mother, who joined so virulently in the tirade against the chained stranger that if words could kill, I am sure poor Angelina would have promptly given up the ghost. However, as the monkey proved inoffensive to the whole family, the parent squirrels calmed down. But a few mornings ago I heard every squirrel in the place screeching away for dear life, and the feathered crow cawing his best. Clapping on my hat I went out to the monkey's tree. What did I see there? Squirrels by the dozen sprinting about, some on the trees, others clinging head down to trunks, while amid all this hubbub sat Angelina contentedly dandling a baby squirrel in her arms. The young rodent seemed entirely at home, and the monkey's expression plainly showed that she thought it quite natural to be hugging the tiny stranger. At my approach the older squirrels retreated to various coigns of vantage, whence they kept up their clamour, and—to cap it all—that confounded crow joined in. I sat down to watch events. At first Angelina had started gibbering deprecatingly at me, but seeing that I did not interfere, she took a fresh grip of her bantling and commenced crooning over it. After a space she gingerly relaxed her hold, and finding that the little beast did not struggle or try to escape, she laid it on the ground. Scarcely, however, had she done this than, to the surprise of all, it scooted, followed by a volley of abuse from the astonished monkey; but the fugitive, instead of making for a tree, went straight at the knot of servants, and selecting the Mohammedan peon, disappeared up the right leg of his broad trousers! The peon stood as if petrified, screaming that he dare not move for fear of the animal biting him. The other domestics stampeded, and from a safe distance yelled all manner of advice to the wretched Moslem. The peon, standing stock-still, continued his lamentations,

THE PEON STOOD AS IF PETRIFIED.

and I was just about to go to his rescue when the little chap reappeared and galloped off to the nearest tree.

We have a few *girrghôts*, or bloodsuckers, here; ugly fellows with a leery, *blasé* look, yellow skin, and serrated back. They are a kind of lizard, and have an odd trick of bobbing their heads up and down in a most aimless fashion. We also have a pair of woodpeckers; rather rare, black-and-white and chocolate birds with a crest which, when looked at in profile in conjunction with the beak, suggests an upraised pickaxe, especially when the owner is at work on wood, or while foraging on the ground. The reptile and bird are at perpetual loggerheads, and I have a shrewd suspicion that the *girrghôt* sucks not only blood but eggs, a penchant the "pickaxes" are aware of, hence this enmity. The woodpecker plies his avocation to the measured accompaniment of "Ock-ock-ock," which means that timber is being perforated, and while that cry continues the bloodsucker scraggles down from his tree to take a walk. The squirrels despise him, Angelina hates him, and the feathered crow treats him to choice Billingsgate.

I had had several glimpses of skirmishes between sucker and pecker, but being desirous of witnessing a full bout, I purposely kept watch from my window the other day. Presently, "Ock-ock-ock" came out of a tree, and shortly afterwards down another trunk scrambled a *girrghôt*. On reaching the ground he did some bobbing, shot his tongue in and out of his angular headpiece, squinted with his pawky eyes in all directions, and, jumping on a poor butterfly, munched it up in a trice. This finished, he started on another sprint, but suddenly stopped and tried to hide under a small weed as the two woodpeckers swooped down and landed close beside him. For a few moments nothing was done; then both birds took wing and in turns jabbed savagely at the lizard, who met these onslaughts gamely, preserving a front to his aggressors, and even dancing forward to meet them. One bird at last got home with his beak, and for an instant the saurian lay capsized on his back with his white nether skin exposed. Whether the fowl's strong bill had drilled a hole in his hide I am not in a position to say, but the punishment had evidently sharpened his wits, for when the other pecker arrived the sucker grabbed it by the wing, whereupon a fine to-do ensued. The captive bird shrieked and fluttered, the lizard holding on like grim death and the free pecker doing its best to rescue its mate. Attracted by the hubbub, Angelina got on to her hind legs and swore at the combatants; the squirrels clamorously

THE DOG-BOY GINGERLY CLIMBED THE TREE.

expressed their disapproval of the disturbance; the minas added their quota to the hurly-burly, and the issue of the conflict was still uncertain when that pestilent crow with the feathered nose dropped from goodness knows where and started indiscriminately prodding at the combatants, finally releasing the captive woodpecker, driving the pair off, and freeing the lizard, who, after a spell of idiotic bobbing, skedaddled back to his tree.

I do not know whether you have the screech-owl in England, at least, such as he is in these parts. I never heard the fellow during my residence yonder; but perhaps I lived too near London. Anyhow, he is here with a vengeance. His cry is spasmodic: one bird

commences, the mate joins in, and the chorus is supplied by other couples within ear-shot. But how am I to describe the utterance of these wicked birds? It is a conglomeration of the most awful sounds imaginable. The owls are little balls of birds, with solemn faces and great yellow eyes, and very seldom show or give tongue while the sun is up. The natives regard them with superstitious reverence, and refuse to help me in trying to catch them. Last moon I marked down a couple in the tree near my bedroom; they flew in and out; their cries too plainly betrayed their presence, and the next day by looking carefully among the branches I spotted them—seated side by side, solemn as judges. I bribed the dog-boy to shin up and endeavour to grab them, for I knew they would be purblind in the sunlight, and that if the imp were careful he could possibly steal up and nab them. The dog-boy gingerly climbed the tree, I watching from below. He penetrated the foliage, and I was expecting to see him get within reach of the owls, when he suddenly began yelling out. He tumbled rather than clambered down to the earth, and, still boo-hooing, cut as if for his very life. I sent a horsekeeper flying after the fellow, and when he was brought before me he said that he had been terribly frightened by the uncanny aspect of the birds at close quarters, describing them by the Tamil words of *pishâsh mâdray*, or "like devils."

Those owls still inhabit my compound, and will continue to make night hideous till I go into Madras and buy a shot-gun. But they take a back seat to that villainous crow; I shall certainly attend to him first and then think of the others.

CHEAP MOTORING.

JONES'S motor-car,
Cheap, second-hand; to look at—grand:
(With no restraint upon the paint
They often are).

One afternoon,
On pleasure bent, a ride we went.
"Nice easy pace, no need to race;"
He spoke too soon.

"Oh, by the way,
My chauffeur's ill," said Jones, "but still
I think we might get on all right."
"I hope we may."

We chose a route.
So did the car! Well, there you are,
The latter won, and so our run
Bore lasting fruit.

Jones's wretched car
Beneath its paint was weak and faint
With heart disease, which made it wheeze,
And groan and jar.

The tyres were bad,
In fact the worst. And one *would* burst
Each mile or so. Said I, "You know,
Old man, you're 'had'!"

Where'er we sped
Upon our way, no hens will lay,
No dogs will growl, no pussies prowl;
For all are dead!

Our tortuous course,
Though warned by shouts from friendly louts
At several "traps" (not on the maps),
Was checked—by "force."

Down Stopham Hill,
Like shot from gun, we tore like fun.
"The brakes won't act," yelled Jones (a fact);
"We'll—have—a—spill."

"That offside ditch
Might break our fall! A chance—that's all."
Perhaps that tree—which would it be?
I wondered which.

The ditch? Well, yes.
And though no bones were broken, Jones
Was badly bruised, my eye contused,
And what a mess!

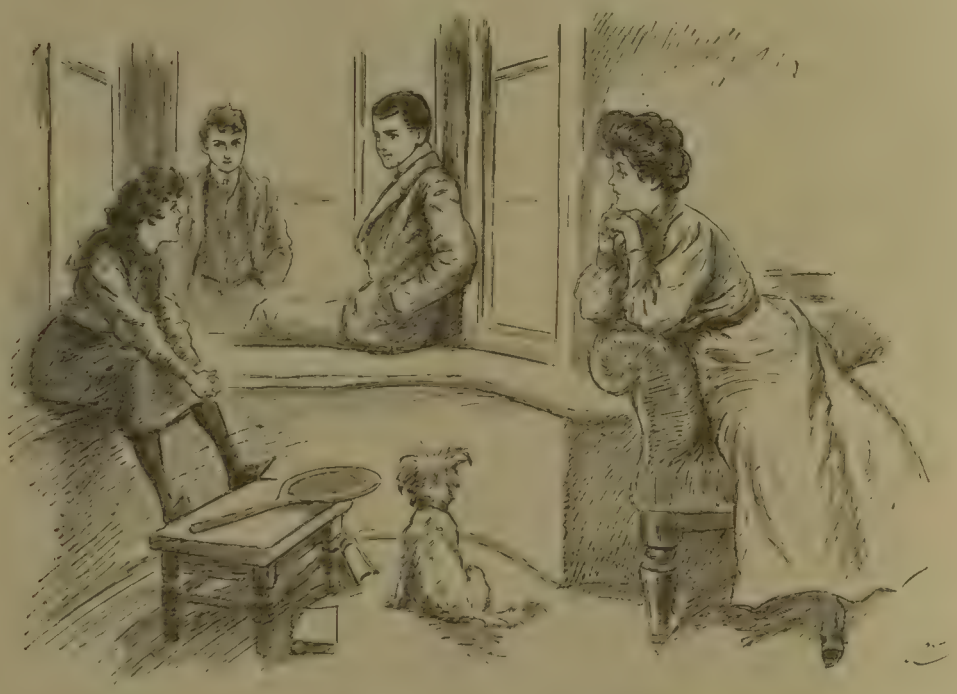
The car, o'erturned,
Was soon on fire. And o'er the pyre
We swore on oath that we were both
Quite glad 'twas burned!!

REGINALD RIGBY.

How We Raised the Wind.

By M. STRICKLAND.

Illustrated by GORDON BROWNE, R.I.



IT was the Guv'nor's old story—"no money." That's the worst of a big family and a father in the City—it's always the same old yarn nowadays.

Now we are really a jolly smart lot—what one calls a "talented family," though you might not think so to see our school reports and to hear the Pater grousing about the money he has wasted on our education. Anyway, we proved our capabilities last summer, and it is just that I'm going to tell you about. It was this way.—A week before we broke up, the kids at home got the mumps very badly, the result being that Donald and I received instructions that we were not to go home, but to meet the two girls at Victoria and go straight down to our seaside house at Broadgate. The Guv'nor is always saying he can't afford to keep up two establishments and threatening to sell Sea View, but, fortunately, it belongs to the Mater and she puts her foot down about it. Our old nurse, Elspeth, looks after the house, and it was to her tender mercies that we four boarding-schoolites were despatched.

It was Cecil's last term—she had turned eighteen, and just put her hair up. She's a jolly pretty girl, as sisters go—young Dolly's no fool either; and I can tell you that we weren't at all sorry to find ourselves at Sea View without the kids or the authorities. But there was one drawback: you're generally pretty "broke" by the end of the term, and the Pater (who is a thoroughbred Scot) had sent us only a shilling or so over our fares. The girls were in the same box, and after two or three dunning letters home and no results, we were fairly disgusted. As Don says, "It is wretched to be without a penny in one's pockets!" Don is nearly seventeen, and was just at what the girls call the "collar and cuff" stage, so naturally he found it pretty galling.

Unfortunately, we do not inherit the Scottish tendency, so it can't be wondered at that we kicked at being left in this state of poverty, especially as the only replies to our letters home were full of orders not to be extravagant with the food, and to be sure and keep up our music and practise every day, &c.

Well, one evening after supper we were all sitting in the dining-room talking things over, and on this occasion we certainly summed up our Highland father as "unspeakable!"

"It would serve him jolly well right if we pawned our instruments," Don said savagely.

We had coaxed every penny we could out of Elspeth from the housekeeping money, and now we really did seem stumped.

"Let's pay them out by running up bills," suggested Cecil; but Don scouted the idea and sat looking glum.

"I've got a scheme in my mind," spoke up young Dolly, looking very wise. "It struck me this evening as we were coming in—don't all scream at me and say I'm mad, though."

"Tell!" said I. "If it's possible and we can raise the wind thereby, why, let us get to it right away."

I might mention that although I am only fourteen, I'm not considered a child by any means. You see, before I was ten, I rebelled at the nursery—that's good for babies. There's nothing like pushing yourself forward and showing what you're made of, in a family like ours. My result was that now I am counted "one of the older ones," because Pa says I've got my head screwed on the right way.

"Out with it, Doll!" said Cecil.

"Well, it's this," said Dolly; "let's be strolling players."

"Let's be—how much?" from Don.

"Why, wear masks and things, and you take your banjo, and we'll make a 'troupe,' and go and sing on the sands, and Billy can go round with the hat."

And Dolly, having delivered herself somewhat breathlessly, looked from one to the other to see how we took on to her idea, and each of us looked at the other, and at last I proclaimed, "Capital!" Then the rest joined in and agreed, and the next minute all our tongues were clacking fourteen to the dozen, every one bettering the other with suggestions.

I mentioned before that we are a "talented family," and it is in the music direction that our particular brilliancy lies. Now was our chance to turn it to account.

The subject of disguise entailed some discussion, but at last Cis hit it—we were to be "Kilties," for we all had Scotch dresses. For once we blessed the Guv'nor for being proud of his clan.

Luckily, the girls had had to have their dresses for some sort of fancy dress show at the school breaking up, and so had got them with them, and Don and I often wore ours for evening-dress; so there we were, a complete quartette of Stuart plaidies! Nothing could have looked more professional.

"If only we had bagpipes!" I sighed.

"Never mind the bagpipes!" cried Dolly. "There will be the banjos, mandolines, violin, and there's that old guitar of mother's hanging in the drawing-room—it wants two strings, but we can easily see to that!"

"Cecil and Billy will be the chief vocalists," said Don importantly; "and then we can have duets, trios, choruses and things."

"Oh, it will be grand!" burst forth Dolly, clapping her hands; "we'll make heaps of money."

The next morning we fell to work in real earnest with our rehearsals and preparations. We routed out all the old books of Scotch songs, and I tell you we hardly budged out the whole day.

It was decided that Elspeth would have to be let into the secret. We could not possibly sally forth every evening as the "Kilties" without her finding out. So we had her in, and after a good many protestations on her part she was duly sworn not to betray us.

As a matter of fact she waxed quite enthusiastic over it when she saw us in our plaidies and heard us singing her favourite old songs.

The first difficulty we encountered was when we fished out our dresses and put them on, and Cecil suddenly declared that she could not possibly wear such a short skirt, now she had her hair up. Don said there ought to be no false modesty where combined art and business were at stake, and I thought it rather smart of him. However, Cecil was obstinate about it, and we were getting pretty sick when Dolly came to the rescue. "I've got it—put your hair down. No one would know you're eighteen; you don't look any older than I do in that dress!"

"Good Doll!" cried Donald, smacking her on the back. "That's the dodge, Cis; you be a flapper again!"

In the end, Cecil agreed to halve it, and did her hair up into what she called a "queue," but what looked like a horse's tail with a great bow on it.

As we didn't know how soon the authorities might not swoop down on us with the convalescent mumpy ones, we decided to start operations at once, so as to lose no time. So, on the second evening after our troupe was established, we set forth. The girls had made very neat little masks of black velvet just to cover our eyes, and I tell you no one would have guessed that we were merely "a parcel of revolting school children."

There is a gate at the end of the garden which opens out into a quiet little by-road, and it was by this we used to emerge, so that people should not connect us at all with that respectable edifice, Sea View.

Although no one can accuse any of us Stuarts of want of nerve, yet that first evening, I confess, required some courage.

"Don't shuffle along in that apologetic manner!" said Cecil to Don, giving him a poke. "Hold your head up and look as if you were used to the business." For there was no doubt he was looking like a blooming amateur.

We stopped, to begin with, where there wasn't a crowd to gape at us, and the girls set down their camp-stools and started off with a mandolin duet. Then I sang "Mary of Argyle" to Don's banjo accompaniment.

"DON'T SHUFFLE ALONG IN THAT APOLOGETIC MANNER!" SAID CECIL TO DON.

There were about a dozen people standing by, after I had got through the first verse, and I heard a lady say something about "that boy's beautiful treble voice."

Although I was a bit bucked up by this, still, we did not really warm to it until we had given a lusty quartette. That put us all at our ease, and while Cecil sang "The Banks of Allan Water," I went my first round with the hat. Of course, all the mean people shuffled off directly they saw signs of a collection, but the decent ones stayed and gave coppers. Two gentlemen put in sixpences, and one said, "I should like to hear you sing again, my boy." Altogether I got two shillings and sevenpence in that round. We remained there another twenty minutes, and then, after one more collection, we bowed and smiled and moved on.

"Four bob, all but a penny," I announced triumphantly; and we were all so elated with our success that we chose a bolder position for our next stand, outside a big boarding house on the front. The people were still at dinner when we arrived, and encouraged by the gathering darkness we burst forth into our quartette with added vigour. We've all got very fair voices, I might remark, and Cecil's is really fine; but then she's had lessons from some of the best masters in town, and is going in for it properly.

Well, before we had finished our second item, there were several heads bobbing at the window and a good group around us. Then Cecil sang "The Bonnie Curl," and by the time she had finished, all the boarding-house people had come out into the garden to drink their coffee and listen. It was a proud moment for us, and you should have seen the fellows eyeing Cecil's ankles.

They clapped so furiously that she had to sing again. It was the first applause we'd had, and of course had to be responded to.

As there were a good many men around, it occurred to me that it would be rather a 'cute idea to make Dolly collect this time, while I sang. She refused at first, but at last I persuaded her by paying her compliments, and saying no one would be able to resist her.

I noticed lots of the boys said pretty things to her, and tried to get her to talk to them, but Doll was much too discreet. She smiled very sweetly when they gave generously, but did not encourage any flirtations or familiarity. But she returned with nearly as much as I got in my two rounds.

After about half an hour's performance we were preparing to move on, when to our surprise a girl came running out of the house, held out a shilling to me and said, "Will you please stay a little longer?" This was what one calls

gratifying, and of course we stayed; in fact, it was ten o'clock when at last we departed.

Can you imagine the pride and delight with which we counted out our "takings" on reaching home? To think that in two hours and a half we had earned seventeen shillings and tenpence! We supped in high spirits, and then Donald divided the spoil. Oh, how we jawed that night! It was past twelve before Elspeth could get us to move, though, to tell the truth, she was really as proud of "her bairns" as they were of themselves.

However, this was only the beginning of things; for, two nights after, emboldened by our success at the boarding-house, we ventured to the Grand Hotel. Broadgate, you know, is pretty full in August, and there was quite a smart crowd at the Grand.

Dolly and I were a bit shy of collecting at first, because lots of people were sitting on the verandah, and it meant us prancing right up to the hotel. I was button-holed by one old lady, (an enthusiastic Scotchy); she was delighted with us—said all sorts of nice things to me, then gave three sixpences and told me to come again.

When we got home Dolly informed us that she had also done good biz out of an old gentleman, whom we afterwards discovered was a genuine Scotch laird, Sir Malcolm Douglas.

"He started questioning me," said Dolly. "Tried to pump me about my family and clan. I wasn't to be drawn, but told him we were collecting for some poor Scotch children. He said it was 'most praiseworthy.'"

"Oh, you little fraud!" exclaimed Cecil, but Dolly answered with her most innocent expression, "It was perfectly true! We *are* Scotch children, and if you have not got money you're poor. Now say I'm a liar!"

"The chief point is, what did you get out of the old josser?" I asked.

"Half-a-crown," replied Dolly proudly; "I'll tap him again to-morrow."

We found we had taken over a pound that evening. Our business was flourishing beyond our wildest dreams. Jove! those were jolly days! Our mornings were spent bathing and generally enjoying ourselves, but the afternoons we devoted to practice for the evening. We were always learning new songs and improving our programmes with various novelties. The latest feature was the sword dance, a performance Dolly and I prided ourselves on not a little. We had some difficulty in persuading her to do it—said she was too big! Such rot for a kid of fifteen to talk like that! but, once more, compliments worked the oracle. You can generally fetch girls that way. Don said, "Oh, I expect her feet are too big now—they'd be all over the shop."

That put Doll's back up, and she dashed out, got two walking-sticks, planked them down on the floor, and began dancing all she knew, and there was no denying she did it jolly well. At last she sat down pumped, and glared at Don with a defiant, "There!"

Then I came in with my few words. "We'll make quite ten bob a week more, if you'll agree," I told her. "You see, you do it so nicely, and it's well known that only graceful girls with pretty ankles and dainty feet can dance the sword dance."

That did the trick, and the new feature was established. Cis played jaunty bagpipey airs on her fiddle, and Don thrummed a sort of accompaniment on the banjo, while Dolly and I did double sword dances.

It caught on like fire and drew crowds, but, by Jove! we found giving encores jolly warm work.

The Grand Hotel had become our regular hunting-ground. For the first hour and a half of our evening we gave performances elsewhere, but nine o'clock always found us at the Grand.

Now, from almost the first night I'd noticed two men always among our audience—jolly smart-looking chaps they were, in immaculate evening-dress. One especially drew my attention, because whenever Cecil was singing he never took his eyes off her. He seldom gave less than sixpence, and usually made some remark to try and get me into conversation. Once he said:

"Is that your sister?" I said, "Both of 'em."

"Lucky boy," said he. I looked at him suspiciously and passed on.

Sometimes they would come outside and stand quite close, and I began to wonder whether Cis had noticed them

We often got special requests for songs, and these two johnnies were awfully keen on "The Bonnie Curl" and "Mary Morison." Cecil had to sing them almost every night. I heard some one in the crowd remark, "It makes one feel all queer down the back to hear her." That was meant complimentary, I might remark.

You see, she's got what they call a "sympathetic voice"; one song is all tears and sadness and makes people weep, the next will be all joyful and full of laughter and fairly bucks you up.

Well, one evening, Cecil's man (as I called him), having paved the way with half-a-crown,

said, "I say, youngster, I wish you would introduce me to her." I was slightly taken aback, I own, but answered with some severity, "My dear sir, in our profession there is no time for idle flirtations. My sister is devoted to her art, and doesn't encourage followers."

The other chap burst out laughing, but Cecil's man said, "Don't talk such unholy rot, you young ass!" which was rude, and I looked my disapproval as I hurried off.

CECIL HAD A VERY PRETTY NEW SONG WITH A VIOLIN OBLIGATO.

I foresaw that this fellow was going to be a nuisance, for there was no doubt he was awfully gone on Cis, so I took counsel with Dolly on the subject. She quite agreed with me that it would be best not to let Cecil know, and to stick firm in my refusal to introduce the man.

By the time we'd been at it two weeks we had made quite a sensation in the place; in fact, every one was talking about the Scotch Singers. In the daytime we used to hang about on the sands and sit on seats next to people and listen to the conversations. No one recognised us in our ordinary clothes, and it was most amusing to hear the different remarks.

There seemed to be a certain air of mystery about us which increased the general interest. There were, of course, plenty of strolling players in Broadgate, but we were quite unique. You see, the public grow rather tired of the nigger and pierrot styles of show, where you get nothing but coon songs and cake-walks, or comic opera things, so I think the Broadgate visitors found us decidedly refreshing. Not only that, but we all looked so absurdly young in our kilts that people were apt to overrate our accomplishments. What became of us during the day was another puzzle, and our quiet independence rather added to the mystery. The various opinions that were rife in Broadgate about us were most funny. Some said that we were the children of a broken-down Scotch earl who had no way of earning a living except by our music. "They look born aristocrats," I heard one lady say.

But at the Grand Hotel the general opinion was that we were collecting for a charity. I guess Dolly was responsible for this report.

Of course, this curiosity became a nuisance, especially when people began to try and fox out where we lived. At the last, we used to be obliged to all part company and go home different ways, to put them off the scent. I can tell you we were thankful for our unsuspicious-looking back gate.

Cecil's admirer continued to be very persistent, so I kept clear as much as possible, and

sent Dolly to collect from him. But I noticed that her fluffy yellow hair was a great attraction to the boys, who rather pestered her with their attentions.

Well, one night, August 28, we had a red-letter performance. Cecil had got a very pretty new song with a violin obbligato, and her ambition was to sing it and play the obbligato herself, at the same time. It required some doing, but she got it perfect, and we three others came in with the accompaniment. It really sounded awfully fine, and every one at the Grand went mad on it. My! that was an evening! None of us will ever forget it. They encored everything, and it was half-past ten before we could get away.

I began to feel quite sorry for Cecil's man; he really was hard hit, and looked at Cis as if he'd like to eat her.

"Look here," he said to me in a coaxing way, "do be a sportsman and introduce me to your sister. I swear I'm not a rotter!" I hesitated, and he went on, "What's your objection?" Then he suddenly caught hold of my arm, "I say, she's not—married or anything?"

I laughed. "Married? Why, she's only just left school."

In the end, he talked me round, and I said I would ask Cis and if she said "yes," then I'd present him to her the very next evening. To tell the truth, I liked the chap, and this little affair rather added to the romance of our adventure. He seemed no end glad when I said that.

On the way home, I broached the matter to Cis. She said, "Oh, I don't mind," in a would-be indifferent tone, but I could see she was really rather keen.

However, "the best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley," as they say in our country. When we, with heavily laden pockets and bathed in glory, reached home that night, a shock awaited us in the shape of a letter from the Mater, saying the rest of the family would join us at Sea View on the morrow.

If a bomb had fallen in our midst it could not have caused greater dismay, for it meant the end of everything for us. At the height of our success we would have to retire. But, as Don said, it was no good grizzling and after all we'd had nearly three weeks' sport and were about £5 each in pocket to boot. So the next morning we laid aside our war paint, with manya sigh of regret, and the "Kilties" disappeared from Broadgate as suddenly and mysteriously as they had come.

In the afternoon, the Mater arrived with the two kids, and we had to pretend we were pleased to see them; but how dull that evening was! And all the time I kept thinking of that poor chap at the Grand, waiting to be presented to his "ladye fair." I guessed he'd be calling me something for having played him a mean trick. I felt I'd like to explain to him how it was, for I used to see him about in the daytime, looking beastly sick of life. But Dolly would not hear of it. "He'll get over it, like all the others 'll have to," she said.

The end of the week brought the Guv'nor and Lindsay. Lindsay is our "big brother." He's reading for the Bar, and it isn't often he favours us with a visit at Sea View. Anyway, we were all jolly glad to see him, and it bucked things up a bit.

We four were in high favour for once with the authorities. "Such strides as they have made with their music!" the Mater said to the Guv'nor. "Elspeth tells me that they've spent hours every day practising." Which proves that Elspeth is both truthful and reliable.

The Guv. isn't often loud in his praises, but he said, "Good!" and "Capital!" several times when we were playing, and afterwards was sufficiently magnanimous as to present us with five shillings each!—a tip which would have been a godsend to us three weeks since. Now that we had been earning twenty-five bob a night, we could afford to sneeze at his offering—however, we didn't.

But to proceed. It was on the Monday evening after the family had joined us. Lindsay, who had been out all the afternoon, came in about half-past six and said he had met Harold Rivers, an old Oxford pal of his, and had asked him to dinner.

Well, at seven o'clock we were all in the drawing-room and Cis was singing "The Bonnie Curl" for the Pater. Suddenly the door opened and Lindsay appeared with his friend—his friend! Great Cæsar's whiskers! I nearly had a fit when I saw who it was. And you should just have seen the expression on his face! He had evidently recognised Cecil's voice outside, for his eyes were on the piano before he had got inside the room.

It was an awful moment. He looked at Cecil, who had stopped short suddenly on a high note, then at Don, at Dolly, and lastly his optic turned on me. Then he said, "By Jove!" And those two words spoke volumes.

It was an extraordinary way for a chap to behave when he was on the point of being presented to his friend's family, but of course it was an extraordinary case. In another

minute the fat would certainly have been in the fire, if it had not been for Dolly. From her corner behind the piano I saw her making signs and shaking her head vigorously at him; then I saw his eyes wander back to Cis, who was very red and looked as if she were going to cry; then (I always knew the chap was a gentleman) he turned to Lindsay, who had stopped short in his introductions and was staring from one to the other of us in blank amazement, and said quite easily, "Curious thing, Stuart, but I know your brothers and sisters so well by sight that it gave me quite a surprise to see them here."

Then he shook hands all round, and we breathed again.

Of course, it was a lame sort of explanation to give, and I could see old Lindsay wasn't taken in, for the look he bestowed on Rivers said, "There's more in this than meets the eye." The Pater looked a bit suspicious too, but Dolly saved the situation wonderfully. I never knew a girl with so much *sang-froid* (that's the word, isn't it?). She chatted on so naturally that Cecil's blushes and confusion fortunately escaped the notice of the authorities; then, thank goodness, dinner was announced.

Rivers sat next to Cis and looked as happy as a king. Every one began to recover, and the Pater seemed quite pleased with Lindsay's friend. I wished Cecil would talk more. I had never known her so quiet, and she turned pink whenever Rivers spoke to her, which was ridiculous, I thought.

After dinner Lindsay suggested we should go out and listen to the band, and I know every one was very relieved when the authorities said they weren't coming.

While the girls were putting on their hats I gave Don the tip to walk ahead with Cecil and leave us others to put matters right. He agreed, like a good chap, and rushed her off directly she came down. Poor old Rivers looked awfully sick, and Lindsay said, "Hullo! what's the game?" But Dolly got hold of his arm and said, "Oh, that's all right; come along, we'll soon catch them up." And I was left with Rivers. I knew things would have to be explained, and as Lindsay would have to be let into the secret, Dolly was the one to tackle him. She's got a way with Lindsay, and I knew she'd put it all right.

It did not take me long to tell my tale, and Rivers was listening quite seriously, when to our surprise the two in front pulled up short and Lindsay suddenly collapsed on to a seat and laughed and laughed till I thought he'd have a fit, while Dolly stood by in mild astonishment.

That laugh must have been infectious, for Rivers started off, and at last the whole four of us were sitting in a row, holding our sides. I knew then that things would shape out all right.

Things did, for, coming home, it was Rivers and Cecil who walked together, and I overheard him saying, "I often tried to picture what your eyes were like behind that horrid mask. It was wicked of you to cover them up." And I guessed that Cecil was evidently getting over her shyness.

Three weeks later they informed the authorities they were engaged. The Pater clucked a good deal about Cecil being too young to think of such things, but of course it made no difference. The rest of us thought it was all right.

I ragged Cis, and told her that it wasn't herself Harold fell in love with, but her voice and her ankles, but she didn't seem to mind much. That's the worst of lovers—they are always blissfully indifferent to everything except their two selves.

Still, we are all agreed that he'll make the best brother-in-law in the world, and, as I often impress on him, ours is a useful family to marry into, because he'll know who to come to if he's ever a bit down on his luck and wants to "raise the wind."

DIVERS AND THEIR WORK.

True Stories of Adventure in the Deep.

By HAROLD J. SHEPSTONE.

DIVERS IN THE ROYAL NAVY; THE DESCENT INTO THE SEA.

IT is somewhat gratifying to learn that the most experienced and best divers are Englishmen; indeed, Uncle Sam, who sends to England for nothing he can obtain in his own country, sends here for divers whenever he wants them. At the moment English divers are to be found all over the world, building harbours, erecting new docks, extending breakwaters and diving for long-lost treasure.

Strictly speaking, there are two kinds of divers: those who work in diving-bells, and those who go down to the deep in specially constructed dresses. The bells are employed on harbour and breakwater construction, for levelling the sea bottom ready to receive the concrete blocks which are laid by dressed divers. In the construction of the new Admiralty Harbour at Dover no less than four bells are daily in use, and the diving staff numbers eighty men, including dress and bell divers. When at Dover some time ago, I sought an interview with Mr. W. Gorman Nutkins, the submarine superintendent of the works, and elicited from him much interesting information about divers and their varied work. When I questioned him as to the sensations experienced in a diving-bell he invited me to "take a trip down," an offer I readily accepted. I was accompanied by one of the foremen and five men. It was a very novel experience. Putting on a pair of stockings, leggings, and a heavy coat, I jumped on to the seat, and the huge bell was swung over the staging by a powerful crane and gradually lowered into the sea. The sensation at first was very strange. As we entered the water, which was driven out of the bell by compressed air I was conscious of a distinct buzzing sound in

my ears and head. I was told to hold my nose and blow through it. Slowly we descended, and at last reached the bottom, some fifty feet below the surface. The bell in question was seventeen feet long, ten feet wide, six feet six inches high inside, and weighed thirty-five tons. It was lit by electricity and it was almost as bright as day inside. We first landed on a bed which the divers had previously levelled. When the bell touched the ground there was about two feet of water in it. This was quickly driven out, and we walked on comparatively dry ground with the sea all around us. The foreman is able to have his bell moved where he wishes by sending signals up to the man in charge of the crane to which the bell is attached.

After inspecting the smooth bed on which the blocks are laid, we went out to sea, and, landing on the bottom again, I obtained some idea of the difficulties of digging a foundation on the floor of the ocean, which in that spot was rocky and rugged. Four men work in a bell for three hours at a time, digging up the ground until it is perfectly smooth and level. The material is thrown into a large wooden box swung in the centre of the bell. The electric lights are placed close to thick little glass windows, of which there are eight. We rested quietly on the bottom of the ocean to see if the lights would attract the fish. I was told that they dart at the electric lights, but although we remained under water for some little time we saw nothing of them. As we were coming up to the surface I could not help thinking how much we owed to the man sitting next to me. The engineer above promptly and faithfully responded to all his signals, whether for air or direction as to travelling. While under water one has a feeling of utter isolation, besides a buzzing sensation in one's head. Speaking, too, is somewhat difficult. They say it is impossible to whistle in a diving-bell. A diver often has to give up working in a bell, on account of the pains in the knee-joints and shoulders which he contracts.

When I had changed my costume, Mr. Nutkins introduced me to several of his divers, and we chatted for some time about diving and adventures in the deep. They are a fine set of fellows, our English divers; big, bold-hearted men, as fearless of the dangers surrounding them under water as a soldier in battle. Mr. Nutkins has had no small amount of experience, for he has been engaged on wrecks, harbours, breakwaters and docks in all parts of the world. He has worked alongside some of the cleverest and most daring divers the world has ever seen—many of them, alas! now dead. He accompanied

TWO OF THE DIVING-BELLS USED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NATIONAL HARBOUR AT DOVER.

THE DIVING-BELLS USED DURING THE EXTENSION OF FOLKESTONE HARBOUR. ONE BELL JUST SUBMERGED, IS INDICATED BY THE SPLASH; THE ROOF OF THE OTHER APPEARS ABOVE THE WATER.

that plucky and daring diver, Lambert, into the mine at Workington, some few years ago, when the rescue party succeeded in recovering the bodies of eleven entombed miners. There had been an explosion in the mine, followed by a fire. The divers had to descend one of the deepest shafts in the country, and make their way through a mass of *débris* along the workings, through pools of water ten feet and more deep. The men were dressed in ordinary diver's costume, but carried their air in little reservoirs on their backs.

"Perhaps the narrowest escape I have had," continued the superintendent diver, "was when I was working at Newport docks. We were blowing a huge wall away, which we did by inserting charges of dynamite in the interstices in the stone work, claying them up and firing them with a battery. We managed our explosions all right, but when we were removing the large blocks of dislodged stones, one slipped from the hooks by which it was hung and fell. I was standing just beneath, and those who saw the great block fall thought that my last moment had come. It missed me by a hair's-breadth, shaving off the pipe at the back of my helmet as clean as if it had been cut away.'

In the matter of recovering sunken treasure, English divers hold the records. Alexander Lambert, who died only a few years ago, established a remarkable feat in bringing to the surface seven strong iron-bound boxes, each containing Spanish gold coin to the value of £10,000 sterling, from the Spanish steamer *Alfonso XII.*, which was wrecked in February 1885, when bound from Cadiz to Havana. The vessel sank nearly a mile off the shore in no less than 175 ft. of water, off Point Gando, in the Grand Canaries. The actual depth to the bullion room, from which the treasure was obtained, was twenty-seven fathoms, or 162 ft. Altogether, Lambert made over sixty descents. Before he reached the treasure room he had to cut his way through three decks, and the boxes, when found, were by no means easy to handle, seeing that each turned the scale at two hundred-weight. Two more boxes were recovered by a diver named Tester, who, however, lost his life. A third diver could not stand the pressure. The operations extended over a period of six months, and it was entirely through Lambert's dogged determination and perseverance that the expedition was such a success.

With regard to sharks, one of the divers gave me an interesting experience. "I was repairing a three-thousand-ton steamer," he said, "of

DIVER LAMBERT AT WORK IN THE TREASURE ROOM OF THE "ALPHONSO XII."

From a Painting.

the Hamburg-American Line, which had been wrecked on the bar in the Magdalena River, Columbia. I had been working for days, patching her keel, from a swinging shelf which we had fixed up along the steamer's side. One day I noticed a sudden shade against the light, and there, sure enough, was a shark! About some twelve feet in length, it was by no means a giant, but big enough to make me feel uncomfortable. It swam slowly round me and then kept perfectly still, looking straight at me with its wicked little eyes. I expected every minute it would make a rush at me, so I caught up a hammer I was working with—my only weapon—and struck the steamer's side as hard as I could. A blow like that sounds louder under water than in the air, and it frightened the shark, which went off like a flash."

The celebrated diver Lambert, mentioned above, used to spin an exciting yarn of a fight with a monster shark. For many days in succession he was harassed by the presence of the same fish, which haunted the waters in which he was working. Man and fish watched each other day after day, each on the alert. To drive away the monster the diver used to open the escape valve in his helmet, which for some time had the desired effect. In time, however, the shark refused to be frightened by the escaping air, and realising that things had reached a crisis. Lambert determined to kill the creature. He signalled up to his assistants for a large knife and a looped rope. These were duly sent down, and then the diver prepared for battle. To tempt the shark to come close he offered his bare hand as a bait. The great fish hesitated at first, but at last darted forward with a rush that almost carried it up to the daring man. Then, well within reaching distance, the shark turned to seize the outstretched limb in its powerful jaws, but it was immediately withdrawn, and, simultaneously, Lambert's other arm, knife in hand, swept down. The blade sank deep into the vitals of the baffled sea-tiger, and with a grim smile the conqueror fastened the rope round the body of his defeated foe and sent it up to his men above, whose surprise at the sight of the dead fish may be imagined.

Divers sometimes have trouble with conger eels. "They fight like rats," one told me, "if you get them into a corner, while no one likes them near him under water, for fear of their biting holes in the air-pipe."

"How far a diver can see under water depends upon circumstances," replied another in answer to my question. "In most of the busy commercial rivers, like the Thames, Mersey and Tyne, it is as black as ink below twenty feet. But I have been down some rivers in the tropics where the water was as clear as you could wish. In the waters of the West Indies you can easily see for a distance of seventy-five feet. It is a wonderful sight there to watch the kelpweed swaying on the ocean bed. I have seen acres and acres of the weed, eight feet high, with blood-red leaves as big as barrels all dotted over with black spots, swaying gently in the water, and swarming all over with rock crabs, lobsters, and all kinds of fish."

It is interesting to note that a complete diving-suit, including the weights, turns the scale at 180 lb., the helmet alone weighing thirty-eight pounds. The buoyancy of the water, however, reduces the total weight by about two-thirds. Locomotion in such a costume requires practice, especially in deep water. In the British Navy, divers are required to go to a depth of twenty fathoms, or 120 ft. The greatest depth to which any diver has descended is thirty-four fathoms, or 204 ft. This feat was accomplished by a Liverpool diver named Hooper, who descended that

depth to a wreck in Pichdanque Bay, off the coast of South America. Hooper made several journeys to the sunken vessel, and on one occasion stayed under water for forty minutes. The fact is, few men can venture below 120 ft. At that depth they have to stand a pressure of 52¼ lb. to the square inch. At the comparatively shallow depth of thirty-two feet divers are subjected to a pressure equalling 30,000 lb. weight over their whole bodies over and above atmospheric pressure.

Mention should here be made of the latest deep-sea diving-dress, which has been specially devised for treasure-finding work in great depths. It has been tested by Siebe, Gorman and Co.'s diver Walker at a depth of 189 ft. It is called the Buchanan-Gordon dress, and is made in two parts, the upper consisting of helmet and body, and the lower part of a series of metallic springs, covered with very strong waterproof material. The arms are further fitted with springs, and the legs with jointed supports to prevent the enormous pressure of water forcing them upwards.

During the last ten years an enormous amount of treasure has been brought up from wrecks by divers, but there are still untold millions of pounds' worth of treasure, in the form of gold and silver, both coin and bullion, lying at the bottom of the sea. It is estimated that at the bottom of Vigo Bay alone there is still over six million pounds' worth of silver. In 1897, a Spanish diver, Angel Erostarbe, recovered silver bars to the value of £9000 from the *Skyro*, which sank off Cape Finisterre in over thirty fathoms.

AN ANCIENT GREEK LAMP FOUND OFF THE COAST OF SYRA. SAID TO DATE FROM 400 B.C.

Fifty thousand pounds' worth of Mexican dollars were secured from the steamer *Hamilla Mitchell* a few years ago.

DIVER EROSTARBE WITH TWO OF THE SILVER BARS SALVED FROM THE "SKYRO."

The vessel was lost on the Leuconna Rock, near Shanghai. A Liverpool diver, named Ridyard, brought up sixty-four boxes of dollars from a depth of 160 ft., a remarkable deep-sea diving feat. A chase by piratical junks, when the diver had recovered about two-thirds of the treasure, compelled a temporary abandonment of the enterprise. On its return some time later the expedition was entirely successful.

Many other instances could be given of successful recovery of treasure from the sea, but I have only quoted a few, chiefly notable for the reason of the great depth to which the divers had to descend.

The expeditions referred to were carried out by Messrs. Siebe, Gorman and Co., at whose offices in Westminster Bridge Road may be seen a number of relics which have been brought up from the ocean bed by the firm's divers. These form the quaintest museum imaginable, some of the exhibits being over two thousand years old. Their recovery is a testimony to the skill, energy, perseverance, and determination of man against terrible odds. Many of them cost weeks, nay, months of hard toil before they were brought to the surface, while all of them possess a fascinating interest.

Prominent in the museum is a magnificent vase, made from portions of timbers and guns

of the ill-fated *Royal George*, which sank at Spithead in 1782. Then we have one of the seven treasure chests rescued by Lambert

THE VASE MADE FROM THE TIMBERS AND GUNS OF THE "ROYAL GEORGE," WHICH SANK OFF SPITHEAD IN 1782.

from the *Alphonso XII.* Equally interesting is the ancient Greek lamp, two thousand three hundred years old, found in 150 ft. of water off the coast of Syra. In one of the cases are an officer's sword, picked up among the remains of the French man-of-war *L'Orient*, blown up at the Battle of the Nile, in 1798; a carpenter's plane from one of the sunken vessels of the Spanish Armada; and a number of bowls and vases, some of them of great antiquity. There is also to be seen here a medal found in one of the rivers in South Africa. It evidently belonged to a sergeant who fought in the Zulu War. The most recent and interesting additions include a Viking battle-axe, found off the coast of Norway; and a baby octopus; one of the beech logs from the foundations of Winchester Cathedral, placed there in the year 1207; and also a horseman's spur found during excavations on the same operations. The use of divers for such work in connection with a cathedral is quite novel, but they are rendered necessary by reason of the inflow of water into the shafts which are sunk to a certain depth to enable the foundations to be reached. The foundations are being renewed and strengthened.

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ROWING IN THE TANK.

THE American crews go through a terrible period of winter preparation, which includes rowing in the tank, an ingenious instrument of torture devised in clumsy imitation of a shell floating in "real water." In the basement of the gymnasium is this cemented rectangular pool, down the middle of which is built a narrow trough equipped with sliding seats and outriggers. When the oar-blades are swept through the sluggish water that surrounds this trough, a current is set in motion, while the "boat" remains most emphatically fixed. Although the oar-blades are whittled to half their width, the resistance to the weight of water they must shove round and round is so great that to pull in the tank is to taste hard labour raised to the *n*-th power. At the end of the afternoon's exercise the unconditional oarsman in the early season will have lost from four to seven pounds weight. This programme eliminates the unfit until the ice breaks, and the working barges can be launched. On the water in the early spring the spray freezes where it flies on bare arms and legs, and now and then the barge is wrecked by floating ice, and the oarsmen forlornly scramble ashore as best they can. There are no interested onlookers, no cheering undergraduates, nothing but steady grind far from the campus throngs, under the eyes of unrelenting coaches. The "veterans" must suffer for the sins of the raw material which needs the punishing persistence of effort to develop it. Warmer weather brings some comfort, and the satisfaction of work well done; but the crew continues to be a thing apart from the college interests, toiling in dogged isolation.—RALPH D. PAINE in the *Century Magazine*.

By T. S. GURR.

No. 5.—THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CUMMINGS.

Illustrated by GEORGE SOPER.

FIELDING, the renowned Police Superintendent engaged in hunting down Tantia, the notorious Bheel dacoit, was encamped about thirty miles outside of Chotapur when this telegram, conveyed by special messenger, was placed in his hands: "Return Chotapur at once. Cummings mysteriously disappeared. Foul play suspected. Local police at fault."

Fielding gazed at the telegram for the space of a minute, and then impatiently tore it into pieces. "Confound Cummings," he said, savagely. "That man is a perfect bugbear. I am always bothered with him at a time when I wish he did not exist. What has he been doing now!"

The messenger, meekly waiting this great man's pleasure, timidly hazarded a question: "Is there any answer, sahib?"

Fielding tore a leaf out of his notebook. "I suppose I must go," he grumbled, scribbling hastily. "Will arrive by morning's express," was his reply. The messenger deftly hid the slip in the folds of his turban and prepared to leave.

"One moment," Fielding exclaimed sharply. The native peon prostrated himself in an obsequious salaam. "Did you have any difficulty in finding my camp?"

"None whatever, burra sahib," was the quavering response.

"Who directed you here?"

"I inquired from all whom I met. Whose eyes do not follow thy great Presence?" The man grovelled again.

"Go!" said Fielding more softly. The man hurried off, Fielding watching him with a bitter expression on his rubicund face. "No difficulty in finding me! This, despite all my precaution and boasted wariness. There is, apparently, only one way of capturing my quarry, and that is to follow him alone. Numbers only lessen my chances of escaping observation. If this big drive fails, I'll alter my tactics and hunt my man down single-handed."

He entered his small field tent and, stretching himself in his camp chair, lit a cigar and puffed meditatively. Another week would make twelve months of this fruitless special service. His reputation as a police officer of high standing was seriously at stake. He had greatly crippled the scope of Tantia's operations, and kept him a constant fugitive, but by his skill and daring the dacoit had evaded every attempt at capture. At regular intervals, some fresh escapade of the redoubtable outlaw was brought to Fielding's hearing. A month previously Tantia had disguised himself as a barber and entered the camp of the third class native magistrate, then on his mofussil circuit. This functionary, who, some six years before, had sentenced Tantia to a short term of imprisonment for petty theft, unwittingly availed himself of the barber's services. The shaving and shampooing over, the magistrate tendered payment. "No money," the barber replied, "but this," and quick as a flash he had cut off the tip of the magistrate's nose!

Since then, he (Fielding) and Ashcroft had been close on Tantia's heels. The dacoit chief's energy and slimness, however, caused him profound

HIS OFFICE PEON CAME ROUND TO SEE WHO WAS KNOCKING.

amazement. Reports credited him with being here to-day and forty miles or so away on the morrow. Twice during the month he had committed depredations within Chotapur, in defiance of "the perfect system" of guarding the town initiated by Cummings. Fielding was slowly being forced into the conviction that one of the Bheel's followers was masquerading as Tantia. In no other way could his apparent ubiquity be explained.

According to promise, Fielding arrived in Chotapur by the morning's express. Bell, the resident engineer, McGregor the doctor, and a crowd of excited Europeans were at the station to meet him. Immediately after breakfast he was hurried off to the spot where Cummings was last seen. Bell did most of the talking.

"The whole affair," he said, "is an abominable mystery. Cummings, as you may know, was taking his furlough leave, and three days ago the station gave him a social in the Institute. It was his intention to depart for Panchgani next day to spend a fortnight with his brother, prior to setting sail from Bombay for England. All his luggage was sent away the previous day; his household effects had been sold to a local Borah a week before. A large gathering farewelled him when the evening's entertainment was over, and MacGregor and I accompanied him some distance homewards—in fact, up to this spot. We stood conversing here for half an hour or so, and then bade him good night, agreeing to see him off by the Bombay mail next day. About five minutes after we parted, MacGregor remembered something of importance he had forgotten to ask Cummings, and we immediately turned with the object of overtaking him. Both of us hallooed, but getting no response we walked right up to the house. You see that his house is not five minutes' walk from here, and that the pathway is quite unobscured. We knocked at the door, which to our surprise was securely locked from within, about ten minutes after we last saw him. His office peon, the only person about the premises, came round the side of the house to see who was knocking. To our amazement he declared that his sahib had not yet returned home. Intuitively, we felt something was wrong and gave an alarm at once. The police and a big body of local residents organised a search party, and we scoured the neighbourhood. From that time to the present, large numbers of sympathisers have continued to seek his whereabouts. Not a trace of him, however, has been found. His distracted brother arrived from Panchgani yesterday and took charge of his few remaining effects. The whole station, as you can understand, is stunned by the awful tragedy, and we all look to you to throw some light on the distressing situation."

Fielding looked up the pathway cut through the stony, impoverished millet field, and stood fixedly gazing at Cummings' bungalow for a minute or two. Then he turned on his heel and walked back towards the station.

Bell followed him at once with an expression of deep disgust. "Won't you go up and examine the house?" he exclaimed.

"It is useless to examine anything. We could not find clues now even if they had existed. You have wasted my time calling me here, and time is precious to me now!"

"Wasted your time?" Bell gasped. "Shame, man! A Britisher foully murdered, the miscreants at large, and you speak of wasted time! A pretty type of police officer you are!"

Fielding smiled blandly. "You'll probably find Cummings' clothes presently," he said.

The infuriated whites who stood around looked as if they could have stoned him.

The cordon which Fielding had set drew closer

and closer round Tantia and the desperadoes who bravely clung to their chief. Spies brought information at every hour of Tantia's whereabouts. Ashcroft worked inwards from the north in a narrowing semicircle towards the small village of Chota Nandgaon, where Tantia remained like an animal at bay, and from the south Fielding's men joined forces and cut off any chance of escape.

Every movement had been made with the utmost secrecy. Fielding's men had been posted to ensure that no one approaching or leaving the village could do so unobserved. As a proof of the excellence of this arrangement, the villagers moved about their usual occupations ignorant that lynx-eyed men were scrutinising them at every step. A party of Bhrinjaris, a gipsy tribe, passed through the cordon and camped on the village outskirts little thinking that every member had been subjected to a close surveillance. A fakir or guru, bent and grey of beard, clanked past with his begging bowl in his hand, not dreaming that he had been followed for a couple of miles. From the top of a smooth-crested hill about five miles distant, Fielding, with his powerful glasses, swept the surrounding country, which, being rough and broken, was most difficult to keep well guarded. It was evening now, and the light was rapidly failing. A strange nervous excitement overcame him as he watched the shadows deepen, the excitement that comes from anticipation of success. Oddly enough, he thought of Cummings' disappearance and wondered if a certain theory which had flashed into his mind on receipt of the telegram was a correct one. The opprobrium under which his callous and indifferent attitude at Chotapur had placed him would then prove ill merited, and Cummings would return to a notoriety which would effectually crush his future ambitions. The news of the discovery of Cummings' clothes in a well five miles away from Chotapur, which had reached him two days previously, had not horrified him to the extent that it had the ardent search party which had dragged every bund and pool for miles around.

The evening swiftly deepened into a dark but clear, starry night. There was a hard night's work ahead of him, and he stole back to his small tent, cunningly pitched in a wooded hollow, to prepare himself. A hundred yards from his camp, a figure suddenly confronted him and handed him a sealed official envelope. The man uttered one word, "Jogi," and was gone.

He was a short, spare man, and Fielding recognised him as one of Tantia's followers who had turned traitor and informer. The envelope was his credential, and the word "Jogi" was one of serious import. It made Fielding's spirits sink, for he understood by it that Tantia was aware of his imminent danger, and, disguised as a "Jogi," or religious mendicant, was striving to escape.

His naik entered Fielding's tent and made his report. "All is well," he said; "Tantia is still in the village, and a tamasha is to be held in his honour. Hark! the tom-toms have commenced. In an hour or two this hand will be on his throat," and the naik's eyes gleamed.

Across the silent jungle waste came sounds of riot and revelry. The tom-toms beat furiously, and now and again the blare of a conch was heard above the din.

"Has any one passed through the cordon from the village?" inquired Fielding in a subdued voice.

"A small party of Marwarris set off for the next village at sunset. The old fakir also left a little earlier. Those are all!"

"Send round word that every wayfarer is to be detained. Keep a special look-out for a 'Jogi.'"

The naik hastened away. When he returned, a stout, complacent-looking holy woman was standing at the tent door. She was dressed in a dirty salmon-coloured sari, her feet were bare, in one hand she held a staff and in the other a begging-bowl. The naik angrily ordered her away. The woman whined a feeble protest. The naik stood aghast, and then admiringly exclaimed, "Shabash sahib." It was Fielding, equipped for his night's work!

Beneath a fine, spreading tree, set in a thick tope a good distance from any path or road, a little wood fire smoked and smouldered. Huddled beside it sat the old fakir, quietly completing the repast he had just cooked. He was undoubtedly a saintly man. His hair was very thick and matted, and his forehead was daubed with the marks of priestly office. The rough hairy blanket of penance was drawn across his naked body, and his bare arms and legs were grey with ashes. Fixedly he gazed before him into the embers, deaf to all sound, unconscious of everything, his soul in communion with the Infinite.

Thus he sat, feeding the fire occasionally with a dry twig. At length he gazed up through a space in the foliage at the stars. It was midnight, and he curled himself wearily in his blanket and prepared to sleep.

A footfall roused him and he looked up. A holy woman of comfortable dimensions sauntered

up, and, with an "Ohe" of relief, sat down by the fire and rubbed her hands in the glow. "It is a cold night," she exclaimed. Then, half apologetically, "I was journeying to Chota Nandgaon, but was benighted: The jungle is full of strange sounds and movements, and I am timorous. How far goest thou?"

The old fakir half raised himself and placed his hand to his mouth.

"I understand," she said; "the vow of silence." She peered long and curiously into her companion's face. "Perhaps," she continued, sadly, "I am unworthy to share the

"IT IS A COLD NIGHT," SHE EXCLAIMED.

company of so saintly a man?" and rose to depart.

The holy man raised his hand deprecatingly, but, with a lingering look at the smouldering fire, she slowly moved off into the shadows. The fakir's eyes followed her till she was lost to sight. When her retreating footsteps were lost to hearing, he yawned and once more composed himself for sleep.

He had hardly lost consciousness when a noisy thud wakened him again. Without making a movement, he looked cautiously in front of him. Some one had surely thrown a stone. His doubt was dispelled by a second missile, which struck the fire and scattered some of the glowing embers on his naked legs. He started up and brushed away the ashes which seared into his flesh. Another stone followed and struck him on the head. His matted hair softened the blow, but he rose to his feet half stunned. He heard the soft shuffle of naked feet. Some one was approaching, but he did not wait to see who the blackguardly intruder was. With a surprising spring for so old a man, he bolted into the darkness. No one followed, so he stopped and looked behind him. A "Jogi," yea, one of his own brethren, quickly dropped into his late position by the fire. Amazed at such conduct, he stood and indignantly watched, undecided whether to return and remonstrate or not. Remonstrate? Had he not taken the vow of silence, and was not this but part of his penance? He quietly walked off to seek another refuge.

With downcast eyes he jogged along. Under his feet the twigs and dry leaves crackled, and he frequently stumbled over the stony ground. Was it imagination, or did a figure flit past some distance ahead? Every sense was immediately alert. There were certainly sounds of movement, the movement of human feet, the cautious hesitating tread of man when he is striving swiftly but silently to stalk his foe. He was being followed and dogged at every turn. That was certain. He did not offer his enemies a chance. Casting his hairy and cumbrous blanket from him, he took to his heels and rushed off at topmost speed.

He ran anywhere, dodging and twisting to escape the dark figures which had suddenly sprung out of the depth of the night. They were before him, behind him, all around him, and they charged for him with the unerring instinct of a pack of hounds. They might have been mute beasts for the silence they maintained. He heard their breathing, the sound of their scurrying feet, the fluttering of birds as they fled disturbed from the bushes, but no spoken word or exclamation. He alone was ready to rend the silence with a scream of terror and agony, for as he ran he felt the cold knife drawn across his throbbing windpipe. Stranger than all, when he emerged from the wood and gained open country, he could have sworn that the holy woman, with her sari streaming behind, was pursuing him too.

He ran as men run with death at their heels. How far his maddened flight extended he did not know, but presently exhaustion set in and he realised that all was over. His weary limbs refused to move, his tightened breath

was slowly strangling him. He fancied he heard the sound of human voices behind, and he heard men shout in response immediately in front. A huge form loomed up a few yards ahead and came straight for him. It was useless to try and evade this giant demon. With a feeling akin to relief, he sank into the arms which closed round him in a powerful hug.

"At last, you scoundrel! There's no escape this time!" The fakir, trembling, faint and speechless, heard the words, spoken in excited and emphatic English, with a joyous leap of his heart.

One by one his pursuers gathered round, gasping, and prepared at a command to rend him limb from limb. The holy woman was amongst them, too, and she forged her way to his side, and viciously clutched him by the beard. It came away in her hands. Then she grabbed his hair and tore that away.

"Have you got a match, Ashcroft?" he asked. "Let us have a look at the dog! Thy days are numbered this time, Tantia!" he exclaimed to his prisoner, still unable to recover speech. "Thy holy missions, too!"

Ashcroft struck a light, and both he and Fielding peered into the dacoit's face. A momentary glance was all that was needed, and Fielding sprang up erect with the cry:

"*Cummings*, by Jove! So much for my stupidity and your confounded amateur detective business! We've followed the wrong man. Surely you are the old fakir that I visited in this guise an hour or so ago?"

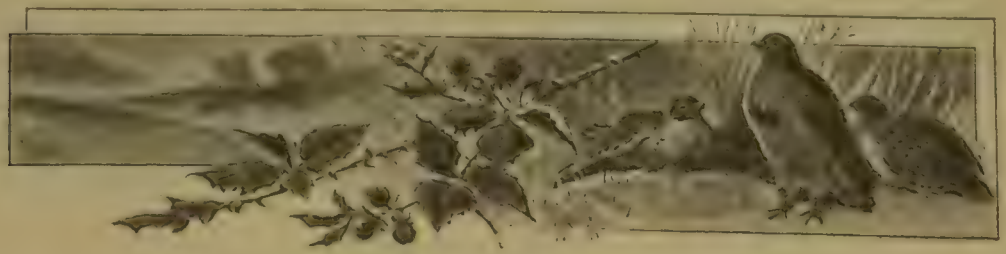
"You're correct, Fielding," Cummings said between gasps. "With all your cunning you could not penetrate my disguise. Hang your interference! I've been on Tantia's trail for a fortnight, and now you've spoiled my game and frightened my quarry away!"

"But, confound *you*, man, how come you here? Why did you run?"

HE RAN AS MEN RUN WITH DEATH AT THEIR HEELS.

"I had to leave. Some 'jogi' blackguard pelted me until I quitted and then quietly occupied my place. Then I found myself being followed—" He paused. A thought suggested by Fielding's expression entered his mind, and he stammered out very limply, "Surely that was not Tantia Bheel?"

"We have every reason," said Fielding, in a cold tone of supreme disgust, "to believe that it was!"



FEBRUARY CELEBRITIES.

By Readers of "The Captain."

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD—CARDINAL NEWMAN—LONGFELLOW—
HANDEL—LORD CROMER—SIR HENRY IRVING.

Lord Charles Beresford.

THIS able and fearless sailor was born February 10, 1846, entered the Navy when only thirteen years of age, and has risen through the various ranks to that of admiral. Whilst a "middy" on board the *Defence* he saved two lives. Seven years later he greatly distinguished himself at the bombardment of Alexandria.

While the bombardment was in progress, the Marabout Fort was firing on the larger vessels of the British fleet. On seeing this, Beresford ran his small gunboat right up to the fort and opened fire on it with the comparatively small armament of two 64-pounders and one Woolwich rifled gun. While firing on the fort he took care to so manœuvre his vessel as to present the smallest possible target to the enemy. His bravery was amply rewarded, for he very soon disabled three of the enemy's guns, one shot from which would have sent the *Condor* to the bottom. The Admiral of the fleet quickly recognised the smartness of the action, and signalled "Well done, *Condor*," the most noted naval signal since Nelson's great message.

Beresford is one of the real "Hearts of Oak" of England, and he has the full confidence of the nation behind him.

NORMAN WILLIAMS.

Cardinal Newman. Born Feb. 21, 1801.

LONG as dreamful Oxford stands, long as histories of its Movement are extant, so long will Cardinal Newman live in the memories of thoughtful men, whatever be their Creed. Not only as a writer of tracts, as the leader of a great movement, is Newman remembered; nay, if he had written nothing but tracts, theologians alone would know of him, if he were naught but the leader of a movement for Revival of Church Authority, the world would reck little of his fame. It is as a preacher, as a thinker and as a writer that he is still revered.

As a writer he is superb. No matter what his subject—be it a Treatise on Doctrinal Development, an essay on the Grammar of Assent, a Sermon, an Account of his own Life, ever it is couched in utterances limpid and clear, flowing as some cool forest-stream, musically rhythmical, swaying the emotions and the souls of men.

His work is as a glass, subtly revealing a floating vision of his soul. His utter purity, his tenderness and deep sincerity, won the admiration of all who knew him; it seemed as though he walked with God.

Many men hated him, because, forsooth, they knew him not, but none despised him;

CARDINAL NEWMAN.
From an Engraving. Rischgitz Collection.

for who could despise a man who, forsaking all, answered God's call of truth, and, full of faith and trusting in a mighty love, took up his cross and bore it patiently ?

J. E. Cranstoun Bell.

Longfellow.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, one of the greatest of American poets, was born at Portland, Maine, on February 27, 1807. In the relative popularity of the poets of the present time, Longfellow takes a high place, and the reason for this is clear to those who compare his works with those of other poets of his generation. He did not write any great epic or drama ; among his poems we find no indication of profound learning. On the contrary, he wrote poems unrivalled for simplicity, both in subject and in execution. Nevertheless, these abound in richness of colouring and power of delineation. His sweet, smooth-flowing verse is everywhere characterised by tenderness of thought and expression ; and, by his consummate description, he invests the events of every day with a halo of novelty and wonder. For this reason, then, his simple lays, like the ballads and nursery rhymes which have been handed down from the earliest times, will serve to keep his name in remembrance long after the more thoughtful and stately poems of his contemporaries are forgotten.

Longfellow received his education at Bowdoin College, where, though quiet in his habits, he was a general favourite. In 1834 he became Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard University, a position of much responsibility for which he had fitted himself by a three-years' tour in Europe. Twenty years after Longfellow retired from public life, and devoted his time largely to poetry.

The chief among his works are, "The Bridge," "A Psalm of Life," "Evangeline," and "Hiawatha" ; all essentially poems for the young, but, nevertheless, providing much food for thoughtful and careful study. In the last-named poem, for example, we have a series of pictures of Indian life which provide admirable and wholesome reading for children on a subject which, in youthful literature of the present day, has become a dominant feature. Again, what a splendid portrayal of character we have in the indomitable perseverance, the stern hopefulness, and the tender cheerfulness of the hero, Hiawatha ! "A Psalm of Life" shows us a true religion, teaching us not to submit meekly and dumbly to the troubles with which life is beset, but to struggle manfully with the vicissitudes of human affairs, till victory is won.

LONGFELLOW.
From an Engraving. Rischgitz Collection.

After a quiet and peaceful existence, Longfellow passed away in 1882, at the age of seventy-five.

Swinburn S. Cherry.

Handel.

George Frederick Handel was born on February 23, 1685. Just as nearly every genius, which in later years has contributed either to the enlightenment or enjoyment of the age, has in the years of childhood revealed itself, so that of Handel shone forth at an early age. In his boyhood Handel found his recreation in nocturnal visits to the old clavichord in the garret. When quite young he went with his father to the Court of the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels, where after the Sunday services he lingered to play on the organ. His father discouraged his son's taste for music ; but one day Handel's playing was overheard by the duke, who advised his father to put the boy under Zachau, a great organist of the time. This was done, though the child had originally been intended for the law. At eleven, having learnt all that his master could teach him, Handel went to Berlin. His progress was

HANDEL.

After the painting by Hogarth. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

marvellous, and he quickly became the musician of the day. In 1704 he composed his first opera, *Almira*. Six years later, by special request, he came to England. Here he was magnificently received, the King often forming one of his audience. This flattering reception induced Handel to settle here. In 1740 he produced *Saul*, his first oratorio, and two years later gave his *chef-d'œuvre*—the *Messiah*—to the public. Some years afterwards Handel became blind, but this affliction did not hinder his composing or giving public performances; indeed, he continued to compose until a week before his death, which occurred on April 14, 1759.

Handel's manners were rough and his temper was violent, but his genius made such defects in character pardonable. His was talent of the first order, and it was coupled with an indomitable perseverance, an ambition to achieve the highest, which rightly earned him a resting-place in Westminster Abbey.

REGINALD LUMB.

Lord Cromer.

EVELYN BARING, Earl of Cromer, may fittingly be described as the maker of modern Egypt. Born on February 26, 1841, he began life, on leaving school, by entering the army, retiring some eighteen years later with the rank of major. Then followed a few years' sojourn in India, where he greatly distinguished himself as Financial Member of the Council, his services being justly rewarded with a K.C.S.I. In 1883 he succeeded Sir Edward Malet at Cairo as Consul-General and Minister Plenipotentiary. The work he had to perform was terribly uphill, but how well he accomplished this is best shown by the thriving state of Egypt at the present time.

When Sir Evelyn Baring (as he was then) first arrived in Egypt the country was on the down grade. Bribery and corruption were rife in all the offices of public administration, but when his fiat went forth that they must cease, it was no empty threat, for a clean sweep of the unworthy officials was made, and a system which ensured proper behaviour speedily established.

Another noteworthy feature of Lord Cromer's ministry is the practical abolition of slavery. Taxes have been considerably reduced; the work of irrigating and fertilising the land has been taken in hand scientifically; the railways and telegraphs have been greatly extended, and great reforms carried out in all branches, with the result that Egypt is now a thriving and prosperous country.

As an example of the iron hand in the velvet glove Lord Cromer stands pre-eminent. The service he has rendered to his sovereign and country by his single-minded devotion to his work has been of inestimable benefit. During the time Lord Kitchener was in Egypt he described his colleague as "the master of us all," and Lord Lansdowne says that, under his guidance, Egypt has "advanced by rapid strides along the path of financial and material prosperity." The golden opinions of these eminent judges have been deservedly gained by Lord Cromer owing to his learning first to be a man, and then to command men.

T. W. SPIKIN.

Sir Henry Irving.

BORN on February 6, 1838, Henry Irving lived during his earlier years in that garden of romance, Cornwall. As a boy he devoured Shakespeare and Cervantes, and did not take kindly to the prosaic environment of school life. Later his romantic temperament found uncongenial housing in a City office. However, in after years, this portion of his career, irksome though it seemed to him then, proved to

SIR HENRY IRVING AS HAMLET.
After the picture by Sir Edwin Long. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

have a great deal to do with his ultimate success; for it was at this period that he first began to study elocution, and made the acquaintance of the actor through whose influence he succeeded in getting a footing on the boards, his first appearance being at Sunderland in the year 1856.

The hard time which now ensued, the extreme poverty and the severe privations which Irving had to endure, have been so luridly pictured by his numerous biographers that further comment is needless. Knowing his dauntless spirit, we have all a good inkling of how he would battle with his hardships, and it is enough for us that he came through them with colours flying, having "played the game"—and won!

Irving's was a greatness that would have manifested itself in any *rôle* of life; that greatness which, intermixed with courage and determination, forms that rare quality—genius. He could have played the statesman, not only in the glare of the footlights, but in real life, not only in imagination, but in reality. However, he was content with the stage, and we are more than content with his choice.

Such was the man whose death at the close of the year 1905 must rank as one of the most calamitous events of that memorable year. Beloved of every one, and at the zenith of his fame, it was worth living to die such a death, and we may console ourselves with the thought that it was just that finale to the drama of life that his artistic soul would have appreciated.

And thus we leave him, with ever a blessing on his kindly heart, and with the memory of the strangely appropriate last words of his career echoing through our ears:

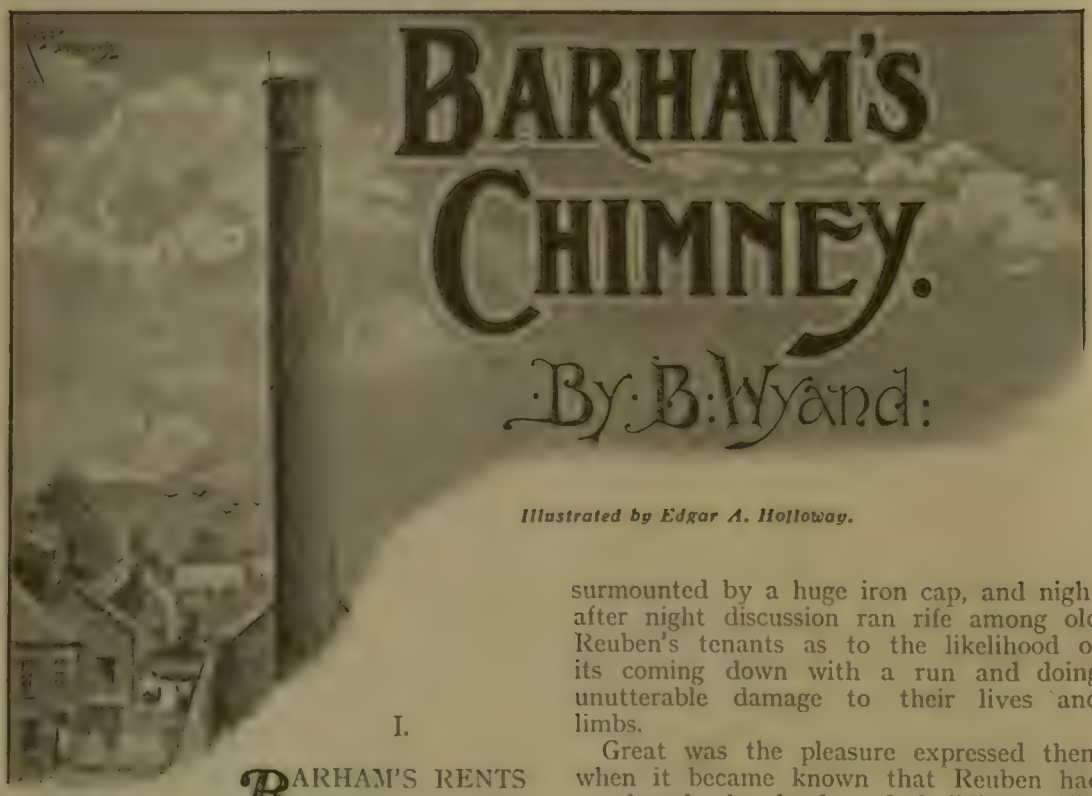
"Into Thine hands, O God, into Thine hands."

ARTHUR W. FOX.

The Choice of Books.

A BOOK should be valued for two things—its matter and its form. Seek writing that is good for both qualities. You don't like to see a person who is badly dressed, or to hear one speak in a vulgar fashion. The form or style of the book must be pleasing if we are to get pleasure from it. What is style? It is difficult to say. I shall not trouble you with Coleridge's definition, but we know the pleasure to be derived from the style of Stevenson or of Dickens. Different authors have different characteristics. We recognise, for example, the roll and thunder of Gibbon, the sensuousness of Keats. In your reading you should always try to get behind your own feelings, and know why they are there. This is literary criticism, and none of you are too young to begin.

None of you can fail to have an interest in *some* books, but that is not enough. Interest in the *best* books can be cultivated. Some may never read history with pleasure, but may revel in fiction. Well, read the best in fiction, and try sometimes to see if you retain your old antipathy for history. It is wonderful how sympathies in literature broaden. One thing one in beginning a study of literature cannot lay too firm a hold of, and it is that to read "Kidnapped" or the "Antiquary" is as pleasant a task for him as the reading of the latest "Penny Dreadful," though we cannot claim that the cover is as much to his liking. Once, however, let him get into the way of reading inferior books, and good writing becomes difficult to digest.—*Maclaren High School Magazine.*



BARHAM'S CHIMNEY.

By B. Wyand.

Illustrated by Edgar A. Holloway.

I.

BARHAM'S RENTS were so called after their owner, one Reuben Barham, a gentleman whose name was a byword in the county for close-fistedness. His occupation would be hard to state, for he dabbled in anything which appeared likely to bring in a decent return for the money invested. He was coal-merchant, saw-pit proprietor, general commission agent, shopkeeper in many lines, and speculative builder, while the "yard" he owned formed a dumping-ground for the house refuse and garbage drawn from miles around. His latest investment had been the purchase of a piece of land at the back of the "Rents," on which stood a disused and ruinous works. Upon this it was his intention to run up a cheap line of cottage, good enough, as he expressed it, for workpeople and their families.

Now Barham's Rents had also long had its eye upon these same works; but not with a view to their purchase. Isolated from the main building, but in a similarly ruinous condition, stood a very tall and very ugly chimney, with a decided "list," or leaning, in the direction of the dwellings in the "Rents." To make matters worse, it was surmounted by a huge iron cap, and night after night discussion ran rife among old Reuben's tenants as to the likelihood of its coming down with a run and doing unutterable damage to their lives and limbs.

Great was the pleasure expressed then, when it became known that Reuben had purchased the land and buildings. The removal of the dangerous chimney might now confidently be expected; but the weeks drifted into months and nothing was done. A petition from the tenants to their landlord elicited no further reply than a snarl and a request to them to mind their own business; and so matters stood at the latter end of the year, when old Reuben was called away north on a very important piece of business.

"I shall probably not be back for a couple of weeks," he said to his son, "and I leave matters in your hands. Of course, you'll cut the expenses all you can, and if any of those rascals in the Rents become tiresome, don't wait for my return, but fire them out neck and crop."

He had not yet got over the annoyance of the petition, and had already planned a means of inflicting speedy retribution upon the offenders immediately the business he then had in project was accomplished.

Young Barham was in almost every way the precise opposite of his father. He was frank, open, impetuous, and good-hearted to a fault, and had received the finest education that money could procure. With al-

this, he was thoroughly loyal to the old man, from whom he had received so much, and he was in consequence considerably perturbed in mind when, the very day after his father left, a notice from the district surveyor reached the office to the effect that "a certain structure, a chimney, to wit, situated upon the site of the old Chemical Works in the parish of Thorpeley, was in his opinion in a dangerous state" wherefore—to cut the matter short—he called upon Reuben "to secure the same properly forthwith."

Here was a pretty state of things for the son. His father was some hundred of miles away, his precise address uncertain, and to add to the complication a second notice was received within twenty-four hours threatening immediate legal proceedings if the work was not at once put in hand, together with a letter pointing out that if anything were to happen, manslaughter would be the least of the crimes with which the owner of the dangerous structure would be charged.

"There is no help for it," groaned the unhappy son; "the chimney must come down;" and in fear and trembling of what his father would say he despatched a telegram to a London steeplejack, bidding him commence the work without delay, and a special messenger to the district surveyor informing him that the matter was receiving immediate attention.

II.

THE report of the steeplejack confirmed Harold Barham's worst fears.

"It'll have to come down," the man said, after having gone carefully round the structure several times and cast many a professional glance aloft. "Strikes me," he added, "as it never *was* built—that is, built properly, you know. S'prising the scamps there are even in our trade."

He looked the very reverse of one himself, with his clear, bronzed face, lithe, well-knit figure, and straight-glancing grey eyes.

"Tell you what 'tis, sir,"—he had a most wonderful knack of knocking off his pronouns—"'ll bring the ladders down to-morrow—have a good look over it—and give a fair report."

The morrow came, and with it the steeplejack, his two "climbers," and a small waggonload of ladders, rope tackle, iron "dogs" or holdfasts, and other paraphernalia of the trade.

The operations were watched with considerable interest by a small crowd of idlers which had collected in the field, while the back windows of the cottages in the Rents were each adorned by a protruding head. Had old Reuben been at home, the field would quickly have been cleared, but Harold could not see that the intruders were doing any harm, and he, too, was the most interested spectator of all, and had little heart to pay attention to what did not immediately concern the business in hand.

The van was speedily unloaded and its contents laid at the base of the shaft.

Selecting a "dog," one of the climbers drove this with powerful blows into the masonry of the chimney at a point about four feet above the ground. He then, with the assistance of his comrade, reared a ladder against the structure, and having climbed about half-way up drove in another dog at a point which was the same distance—four feet—below the top of the ladder. This done, the ladder itself—a frail-looking appliance, about fifteen feet long, with rungs and side-pieces of squared wood, and wonderfully light—was firmly lashed in position.

"That's all right," remarked Gaffer Brown, the oldest inhabitant of the Rents, to a neighbour, "but 'ow 're they a-goin' to get t'other ladder up? The fust's a easy job 'nuff, but——"

Gaffer had not long to wait, for a climber was now standing upon the topmost rung of the fixed ladder, driving in another dog at the same height of four feet up. He was quite at home at the work, which was more than the onlookers were, for they expected every moment to see the man do a back fall as he swung his arm and his body away from the shaft in order to gain sufficient power to drive in the stubborn dog.

The dog fixed, a light tackle, consisting of a block and pulley with a rope rove through, was lashed to it, and by means of this the second ladder was hauled into position. This in its turn was lashed temporarily at its foot to the first ladder, its middle being supported by the tackle, and up the climber went, to the topmost rung, where he drove in another dog.

Gaffer was open-mouthed with astonishment, and the cunning look of superior knowledge vanished utterly from his wrinkled old face.

"Wunnerful," he gasped, "wunnerful."

The next step was perhaps a little more "wunnerful" still, for, the tackle having

been transferred to what was now the top dog, the ladder was hauled into position and deftly lashed in the same manner as the one that rested on the ground.

It would be wearisome to describe the process ladder by ladder, for each was fixed precisely in the same manner as this second one, until from base to cap of the chimney a long unbroken line extended.

"Pretty sharp, your chaps," ejaculated Harold, who had been watching the operation with the closest attention.

"Ah," replied the steeplejack, with a knowing shake of the head, "Shouldn't employ 'em if they weren't the sharpest in the trade. Why, 've known—ready?"

This last word was addressed to the climber at the top, who had just sung down.

"Ay, ay—all ready."

And without further remark, the steeplejack planted his foot upon the bottom rung and commenced his ascent.

He took it slowly and leisurely, stopping every now and again to inspect the brickwork of the structure, and occasionally poking his metal rule into the joints. He spent some extra time on the cornice, where there was just room for him to walk round, and the breath of the crowd below came thick and fast as it watched him at that giddy height—a hundred and fifty feet at the least—calmly standing upon the twelve-inch sloping stonework which formed the cornice, measuring and tapping and raking with as much nonchalance as if he had been on the ground.

THERE WAS JUST ROOM ENOUGH FOR HIM TO WALK ROUND.

He seemed satisfied with his investigations at last, and a breath of relief went up as he was observed to swing himself on to the ladder again and commence his downward way. Half a minute sufficed to land him

at the foot, where Harold impatiently awaited him.

"Well?"

The man shook his head.

"Absolutely rotten," he said. "Joints completely empty at top, and——"

"But surely," interrupted the other impatiently, "brickwork joints can be filled and made sound?"

"If that were all, yes," assented the steeplejack; "but it's not all. There're cracks at the top as big as—ah, could run my hand into 'em, and one crack—traced it right up from the centre to the top. No go, sir—'ll have to come down."

"And is there no alternative?"

"Well, yes, one, sir."

Harold hung anxiously upon his reply.

"To take the top half down, underpin the lower half, band with iron bands, and then rebuild."

Harold gave a groan of despair.

'The guv'nor 'll never stand that," he muttered; then aloud, "well, it'll have to come down, that's all, and the sooner the better."

The steeplejack waited to hear no more.

"Strike the ladders, lads," he shouted in stentorian tones; and within the space of an hour the old shaft stood dismantled and the crowd drifted away—promising itself a day of excitement on the morrow, when the structure was to be "falled."

III.

RICHARDS, the steeplejack, was a man of his word, and the morning, at seven o'clock, found him with his assistants ready to set about his task. The "plant" for this operation was of the simplest, consisting in the main of cold chisels and hammers, with which the brickwork at the base was to be cut away, a miscellaneous assortment of short lengths of stout timber, and a few wedges.

Gaffer had expressed the opinion overnight that "there wor boun' to be an accident afore the day wor out," and some such gloomy prognostication must have been in the air, for Harold himself was in a highly nervous condition.

"You're sure," he asked the steeplejack more than once, "that you can drop it clear of the Rents?"

And Richards had replied with a cheery smile:

"Sure, Mr. Barham? Why, 'd eat my ladders—yes, every one of 'em, and the dogs into the bargain—if I couldn't drop a shaft just precisely where I pleased—ah, to an inch."

Somewhat reassured at last by the man's sublime confidence in his own powers, Harold turned his attention to the work in hand.

The climbers were now hard at it, cutting away the brickwork, and they very soon had a considerable hole knocked in one side of the shaft.

"We shore that up now, you see, sir," explained Richards, "and then go ahead at another section."

Lengths of timber were pinned securely in the opening, with a thick piece as a base for the struts to stand on and another and thicker piece upon the struts to take the brickwork above. This having been properly wedged firm and strutted by cross-pieces as considered requisite, a further section of the brickwork was attacked, and so on, section by section, until the greater portion of the shaft was dependent for support only upon the timbers.

One section alone remained intact, and this, as Richards explained, was designedly left.

"When the timber supports are burned away," he said, "the shaft will fall, but 'll fall in the opposite direction to that piece of brickwork, which, as you see, is on the side facing the Rents."

"You're quite sure?" asked Harold, his old fears returning.

"Sure!" There were unreadable depths of sarcasm in the man's tones. "How can it go any other? With the timber burnt through, and no support left on the one side, how can it possibly suddenly lift itself up and shoot in the other direction?"

By this time the climbers were busily engaged in "laying" a fire built up of a cartload of miscellaneous wood, placed well in and around the timber supports. At a word from Richards a match was applied to a bundle of shavings and a huge flame burst into life.

Within the field, but at a very respectful distance now, stood Gaffer and his friends and fellow-tenants.

"If it don't come fair down on the Rents," said the old man suddenly, "my name ain't Gaffer Brown, and I ain't eighty-seven come Martinmas three weeks."

There was a cry among the womenfolk at this, and one or two started to run homewards, with the obvious intention of emptying

THE SPECTATORS SAW HIM GRIP VIOLENTLY HOLD OF THE FIGURE OF AN OLD MAN AND RUN LIKE MAD ACROSS THE TRACK THE SHAFT WAS TO TAKE.

their cottages of furniture; but a word from a climber who had been sent to ask them not to come nearer soon calmed their fears.

The fire was glowing now like a veritable furnace, and the roar of the flames up the old shaft could be plainly heard by the on-looking crowd. Higher and higher leaped the flames, redder and fiercer grew the glow, while ever and anon the crack of a splitting piece of timber would scatter a volley of sparks in all directions.

"Moving, Jim?"

Jim placed his ear as near as he could to the sound portion of the brickwork, and shook his head.

"Ne'er a move," he replied shortly.

Still the flames ascended, and the roar and crackling went on with increasing fury. From out the glow of the furnace fell at intervals charred fragments of the timber, and a small ring was cleared—the steeplejack and his men jumping nimbly away—as a couple of score of loosened bricks came tumbling helter-skelter from where one of the cross supports had given way.

"Can't be many seconds now," said Richards. "Should stand away a bit if I were you, sir."

"But you're sure of the path it will take, aren't you?" asked Harold. He was regaining his confidence, and he regarded the other with an amused smile.

"Sure enough, ay," growled the steeplejack; "but 'll twist a bit—just a wee bit—sometimes. Ah, there she goes—no—yes *-hi, you there, get out of the way!* Run, Jim, run!"

Jim ran like a hare towards the direction in which his master pointed, and the next moment the spectators saw him grip violently hold of the figure of an old man and run like mad across the track the shaft was to take.

And only just in the very nick of time, for with a crash and a roar and a mighty rush, the giant structure came tumbling down and lay in a great heap upon the ground, which shook and trembled as though suddenly stricken by an earthquake shock.

Harold had seen the figure of the old man as Richards called out, and had followed almost in the footsteps of the climber, keeping, however, to one side of the line of fall; but the three were now invisible amongst the clouds of dust which had arisen from the riven and scattered brickwork, and as a matter of fact, every one else had been too busy watching the fall to pay further heed to them for the moment.

Now, however, as the dust cleared, the crowd rushed in their direction, and the identity of the stranger was speedily revealed.

"You scoundrel, you—you"

Passion for the moment bereft Reuben Barham of further speech; but the sight of his son, who now advanced, turned the current of his suspended vituperation from the unfortunate climber who had saved his life.

"And this, sir," he screamed, "is the way you enjoy yourself when I am away. Did I not tell you that the chimney——"

"But, father, it is no fault of mine. I——"

"No fault of yours"—the tone of the old fellow was like one continuous scream—"no fault of yours? I suppose these men,"—he pointed to the steeplejack and his assistants —"have had nothing to do with it? I suppose you'll tell me it fell by itself—that——"

His voice trailed into a succession of inarticulate sounds, and the next moment he fell limp and helpless into the arms of Richards, who did not seem at all pleased with his burden.

It was nothing serious as it happened, just enough to keep the old fellow to his bed for a week, during which time he cooled down sufficiently to inspect the notices served, and to sign—with a sigh that would have brought the tears to the eyes of a basilisk—the cheque for Richards.

A Soldier's Life. By P. J. Thorpe.

V.—TOMMY AS A NIMROD.

AMONGST the many pleasures and privileges of a soldier in India there is none he values more than the opportunities which are open to him to give play to his instincts as a sportsman. In no other country garrisoned by our troops is the soldier placed in the same favourable position in this respect as he is in India.

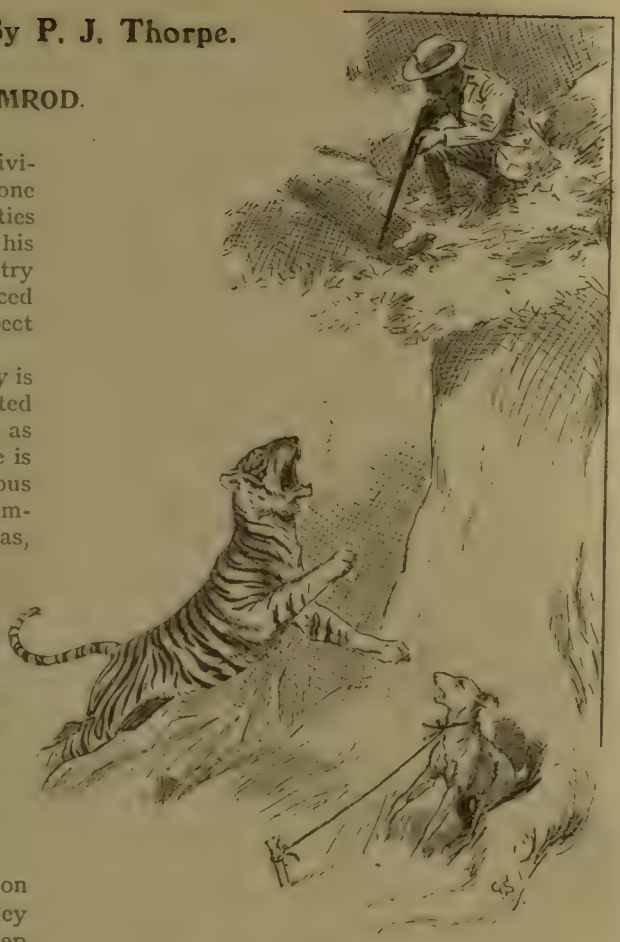
To begin with, a great part of the country is still dense, primitive jungle, thickly populated by tropical birds of every kind, as well as wild animals of many classes. Indeed, there is no lack of game, and if the soldier is ambitious to fly at higher sport, he has but to bury himself in the jungle-brake to find tigers, hyenas, leopards, &c.

The Government of India distribute a certain number of obsolete rifles to each regiment for sporting purposes, and of these the men are allowed the free use, but ammunition has to be provided at their own expense. When a shooting expedition is decided on, a number of the soldiers club together and institute a common fund, from which they purchase ammunition and a day's provisions to start them on their trip.

After the first day, they are dependent on their rifles to replenish their larders, and they rarely fail to procure more than enough to keep them going. One of the party is told off as cook, or they take it in turns, day about. Each day they arrange a *rendezvous*. There the cook takes up his position, and has everything in readiness for them as the hungry hunters return from the morning's chase.

Long before break of day, the sportsmen, donning their thick leather leggings, to protect their legs from thorns and the long damp grass, their haversacks well filled with bread and meat, shoulder their rifles, and, in batches of twos and threes, start off in different directions in search of their quarry. They have with them, of course, their water-bottles, filled with cold tea, if not with liquid of a somewhat stronger nature. When this supply is exhausted, they have to fall back on the forest pools to slake their thirst.

And it is thirsty work! Struggling through a difficult jungle in India, on a warm day, loaded like a donkey, is no child's play, and it is only a man of sturdy constitution who can keep it up day after day for any length of time.



IT NEEDS A MAN OF IRON NERVE TO TAKE STEADY AIM.

The life is full of charm and adventure, and attended by plenty of danger. The risks of attack from wild animals are many, but the danger from venomous reptiles is far greater. India may be well termed a snake-ridden country, and one has to be always on the lookout, especially for the deadly *cobra di capello*, whose bite means certain death in a few minutes.

But "familiarity breeds contempt," and the sporting Tommy soon grows heedless of such risks, laughing at the precautions usually adopted by a novice. Indeed, it is a singular fact that one rarely hears of a soldier being bitten by a snake, although the deaths of natives from snake-bites reach alarming proportions in the year.

It is the ambition of every Tommy who takes to the jungle to shoot his tiger, and he will lie in wait night after night in the vicinity of a pool round which the spoor shows that it is resorted to by wild animals. But the huge cats are

keen of smell, and cowardly to boot, for let them once get scent of a white man, and they will give that pool a wide berth for some time to come.

Strategy has to be resorted to, and a favourite dodge is to tie a young kid to the foot of a tree, while the huntsman lies hidden in the branches above. The bleating of the kid never fails to attract a tiger, if there is one in the vicinity, but it needs a man of iron nerve to take steady aim when the fierce beast, springing on his prey, wakes the forest with his appalling roar. Honestly speaking, I never knew what true fear meant until I was brought face to face in this way with a man-eating tiger which had made considerable havoc amongst the neighbouring villages. Fortunately, I was a shot, and I am proud to say that my first venture proved a successful one, and that the skin of the beast figures amongst other trophies of the chase that adorn my walls to-day.

Many a weary tramp the soldier has in his quest for game, but he never tires—nor does any difficulty discourage him. Often is he saturated through and through with the heavy monsoon rain, but he pegs away, heedless of after-effects, and the sun soon dries him again.

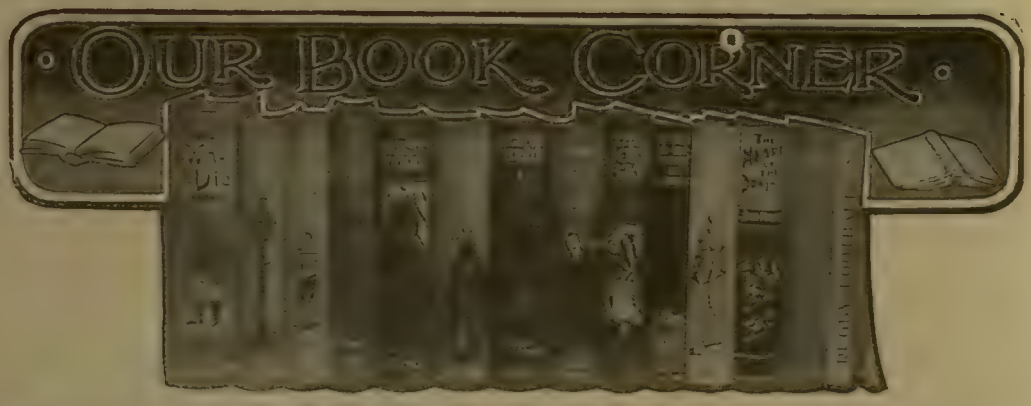
As the result of his wanderings in the jungle, he is sometimes stricken down with malarial fever, but experience has taught me that if a man abstains from intoxicating liquors of all kinds in these hunting trips, he is not so susceptible to attacks from jungle malaria. For this reason it will generally be found that sporting Tommies are, as a rule, men of abstemious habits.

Sometimes in the course of their peregrinations, these martial Nimrods chance on a village where probably the natives have rarely, if ever, seen a white man, and have but the most elementary knowledge of fire-arms. After getting over their first fear of the intruders, they become quite friendly and hospitable, and exhibit the most childish delight at the feats of marksmanship which the soldiers usually manifest to create an impression. But sometimes, when the soldiers are under the influence of liquor, disputes arise, followed by fights in which even life is sacrificed. This causes a *furore*, investigation follows, and the soldiers are usually severely punished by the military authorities. Fortunately, these occurrences are rare, but now and then one sees a case of the kind reported in the Indian papers.

AFTER THE HUNT.

At the close of each day the hunters return to their *rendezvous*, and, having partaken heartily of a well-earned meal, make up a huge wood fire, both for warmth and to scare wild beasts away. Then, lighting their pipes, they sit round the fire, spinning yarns and going through the day's adventures over and over again, until, pipes empty, they turn to and make a shake-down on the ground, with their great-coat for coverlets, and are soon at rest, each one taking his turn as a watch.

When the period of their leave expires, they retrace their steps in the direction of their station with feelings of regret—feelings that are tempered by the hope that they will soon be enabled to organise another similar expedition.



The Defence of the Rock. By E. Everett Green. (T. Nelson and Sons, 5*s*.) This story is much above the average of those written for young people. Slipshod grammar and ill-constructed plots are generally deemed good enough for boys and girls, especially at Christmas time, and a cover with plenty of gilt on it is considered a sufficiently powerful attraction to render the volume acceptable.

Both the style and plot of this book are excellent, and there is just the right amount of history in it. Every English boy should know the story of the famous Siege of Gibraltar, and he could not have it put before him in a better form. Love, adventure, stirring deeds on land and sea, combine to make the narrative one of absorbing interest, and we can heartily recommend the book to those who wish to make a present to a boy or girl.

The coloured illustrations are good, and the cover is quite one of the best we have seen in this class of fiction.

The New Chronicles of Don Q. By K. and Hesketh Prichard. (Unwin, 6*s*.) A second series of short stories woven round one central figure invariably challenges comparison with the volume that preceded it; and a comparison is nearly always in favour of the first series that came from the author's pen. This may be due to the fact that the idea has lost its freshness, or that the author is tiring of his hero; or the difference may exist only in the mind of the reader, who is apt to grow weary even of a very good thing.

In our opinion these later stories by Mrs. Prichard and her son are not quite so good as the former ones. Yet they are well written, and interesting, and there is a certain distinction about them that places them on a higher level than the ordinary magazine tale.

The fate of Don Q. is still left in doubt at the end of the last story, so we shall probably meet with him again at some future date.

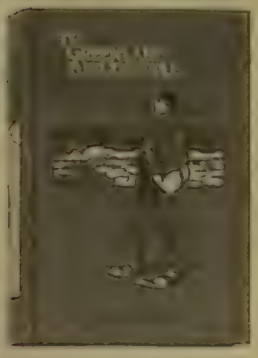
The illustrations are poor, Mr. Stanley Wood's hand seeming to have lost something of its cunning.

A 'Varsity Lunch, an original farce. By Stephen Dakeyne. (6*d*.) This is sorry stuff indeed, unless it be meant as a parody on the farces of the early half of the last century. So much real wit is to be found in the *Isis* at Oxford, and the *Granta* at Cambridge, that we can hardly understand this feeble production issuing forth from the offices of either. Yet it bears the names of both papers on its cover.

The Fen Robbers. By Tom Bevan. (T. Nelson and Sons, 2*s*. 6*d*.) An excellent story of the Fen district in the fourteenth century. Mr. Bevan presents his characters in an attractive manner, and sustains the interest of the reader throughout the book. Sir Roger of Holland Hold, a particularly daring cut-purse, captures a caravan of merchandise intended for one Master Philpott, of London town, whose daughter, Adela, returning from Holland, is concealed in the waggon, and whom Sir Roger holds to ransom. Some of the party escape, reach London, and acquaint Master Philpott of his daughter's predicament. The merchant gets together a party and sets out to rescue Adela. After considerable difficulty he reaches Holland Hold, and one of the party, posing as a physician, undertakes to cure Sir Roger of a pretended sickness, and puts the robber to sleep for sixteen hours, during which period Adela's escape is effected. Some time afterwards, war with Spain breaks out, and Master Philpott, who has become Lord Mayor of London, fits out a war-vessel which he himself commands. He again encounters Sir Roger, and what happens then the reader must be left to find out for himself. "The Fen Robbers" is a thoroughly enjoyable book.

To Greenland and the Pole. By Gordon Stables, M.D., R.N. (Blackie and Son, Ltd.,

3s.) If Book I. forms a somewhat lengthy introduction to the principal characters in the story, we are amply compensated when following them, in two subsequent books, on their adventures midst Arctic ice and snow—in their journey across Greenland by means of Norwegian snow-shoes, and, later, on a trip to the Pole in the *Fear Not*, whose Commander, Captain Reynolds, conceives the idea of taking his ship as far north as possible, and allowing it to be carried across the Pole in the drifting ice-pack. Amongst his company are two boys —Olaf Ranna, and his Scotch friend, Colin McIver, who, together with their four-footed friends, a collie and a terrier, have some thrilling times in the polar regions. Honest old Sigurd, the hardy Norse who looks after Olaf, is a fine character, too. The hardships endured by Captain Reynolds and his company when, after hoisting the British flag at the Pole, their vessel is fated not to emerge again into the open sea, and, one by one, they succumb to the awful "black death," till only seven survivors are eventually rescued by a sealing party, make thrilling reading. Altogether, Dr. Stables has given us a good book; for here, at any rate, he writes of what he knows.



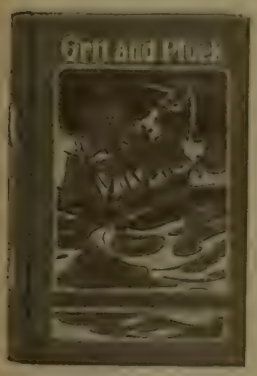
Play the Game. By Harold Avery. (T. Nelson and Sons, 3s. 6d.) This is quite up to Mr. Avery's usual style. If Westacres is not a typical public school, and its *alumni* hardly representative of the average public schoolboy, the author has provided an interesting story. Because three "black sheep," of the usual school type, unhang a farmer's gate, and the new headmaster, somewhat of an enigma to his charges, forbids further runs, certain members of the first football eleven adopt an attitude of passive resistance by withdrawing their services, only to be admonished in the last chapter to the effect summed up in the words that supply the title of the book. There is an under-current of humour running throughout the story, and while the amusements of the juniors are not exactly novel the author records them in a way that is pleasing.

Rather a Scapegrace. By Mrs. Neville Cubitt. (S.P.C.K., 2s. 6d.) An ill-constructed story. Raymond Curtis, aged twelve, rides to hounds during the holidays, and performs feats of horsemanship that lead to his undoing when he returns to Midholm—a preparatory school. Being somewhat of a braggart, he is dared to ride either of two colts in an adjacent field—a task he attempts, only to sustain a severe accident, which brings the affair to the knowledge of the headmaster, with the result that he is credited with having committed other misdemeanours, the penalty for which is expulsion. At the eleventh hour, the truth outs, and Raymond is exonerated. Next holidays, he and his minor set out to walk from Oxford to Southampton to meet their uncle, and, at the end of the second day, on seeking shelter in the garden of the very house at which their relative is a guest, are mistaken for burglars! Mrs. Cubbitt handles her subject in a manner that suggests that she could write a good children's story, but school tales are certainly not her *métier*.

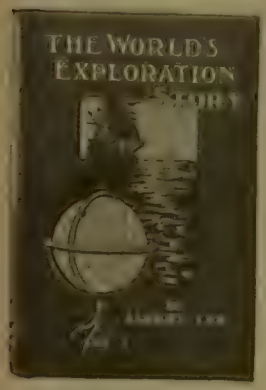
The Walcott Twins, by Lucien Lovell, (Ward, Lock and Co., 3s. 6d.), and **The Magic Beads,** by Harold Avery (T. Nelson and Sons, 1s.), are two very entertaining stories for our younger readers. The former relates in an amusing manner the escapades of a boy and girl who don one another's clothes and are sent away to different relatives before the mistake is rectified; the latter records the adventures of some children who accidentally find themselves alone in a country house for a few days.

Grit and Pluck. By W. C. Metcalfe. (S.P.C.K., 5s.) A drama in a nutshell! By a fortuitous series of disasters, which deprive the *Dancing Wave* of her captain and first and second officers within several days, the handsome hero, Ralph Bold, aged nineteen, finds himself commander of the vessel during a voyage to Sydney. His task would be an enviable one were it not for the fact that the crew, with an over-fondness for "grog," inclines to mutiny,

and, in addition, he has to consider the welfare of three passengers, two of them ladies. A storm disables the vessel, and he is compelled to run for shelter to an island on which, as is previously learned from a message in a bottle picked up out of the water, are the sole survivors of a wreck. Another storm causes the *Dancing Wave* to leave her anchorage, and Ralph is himself left on the island. He is soon taken off, however, by a faster vessel than his own, which succeeds in overhauling the *Dancing Wave*, and so the young commander steers his ship to Sydney, marries the younger lady passenger, and, we trust, lives happily ever afterwards. The author has an eye for the picturesque, but if he would be content to crowd less into his canvas, a more harmonious effect might be produced.



The World's Exploration Story. By Albert Lee. (Melrose, 5*s*.) **Adventures on the Great Deserts.** By H. W. G. Hyrst. **Adventures on the Great Rivers.** By Richard Stead. (Seeley and Co., Ltd., 5*s*. net each.) The Rev. Albert Lee gives a *résumé* of the voyages of the men who braved the dangers of the unknown by journeying beyond the limits which in their day defined all that was known of the world—from the earliest voyages of the Phœnicians down to the most recent attempts to find the Poles. The two latter books are recent additions to a series of volumes recording romantic incidents appertaining to travel, sport, and exploration in various parts of the world; while Mr. Hyrst takes us with those intrepid travellers who penetrated into the great deserts of Africa, Asia, Australia, and South America. Mr. Stead recounts the adventures that befell the dauntless men who tracked to their sources the great rivers of the four continents. We can recommend all three books.



The Field and Forest Handy Book. By D. Beard. (Newnes, 6*s*. net.) The very book for the out-door man or boy. By the aid of lucid instructions and comprehensive diagrams, it deals with the building of log-cabins, bridges, landing-stages, boats, diving-piers, and the like.

Things Worth Doing. By L. and A. B. Beard. (Newnes, 6*s*. net.) This is the counterpart for indoor girls of the book just mentioned. It is full of instructions and suggestions for the making of articles for amusement and decoration from materials to hand in every home.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We have also received copies of the following:

Samba. By Herbert Strang. 5*s*. *Jack Hardy*. By Herbert Strang. (Hodder and Stoughton, 2*s*. 6*d*.) *Peril and Patriotism*. 5*s*. *Deerfoot in the Forest*. By Edward S. Ellis. (Cassell and Co., Ltd., 2*s*. 6*d*.) *Gerald the Sheriff*. By C. W. Whistler. (F. Warne and Co., 6*s*.) *The Lost Treasure Cave*. By Everett McNeil. (W. and R. Chambers. 5*s*.) *Tennis Topics and Tactics*. By F. W. Payn. 6*s*. *Pet Monkeys*. By A. H. Patterson. (L. Upcott Gill, 1*s*. net.) *Maisie's Discovery*. By Bessie Marchant. 5*s*. *The Mascotte of Sunnyside*. By E. L. Haverfield. 6*s*. *Barbara in Brittany*. By A. E. Gillie, 2*s*. 6*d*. *Tales of a Fairy Court*. By Andrew Lang. (Collins' Clear-Type Press, 3*s*. 6*d*. net.) *The Book of Animals*. By Horace G. Groser. (Andrew Melrose, 5*s*. net.) *Cobbett's Advice to Young Men*. (Henry Frowde, 2*s*. 6*d*. net.) *The World's Locomotives*. By Charles S. Lake. (Percival Marshall and Co., 10*s*. 6*d*. net.) *A Scientific Geography*. Book II. *The British Isles*. (Ralph Holland and Co., 1*s*. 6*d*. net.) *Children's Annual*. (Blackie and Son, Ltd., 3*s*. 6*d*.)

NATURALISTS' CORNER.

Conducted by EDWARD STEP, F.L.S.

Redpoll.—S. C. H. (Leytonstone) purchased a Redpoll some time ago, but recently the red colouring has quite disappeared. He says: "It is usual, I believe, for the plumage of most birds to become less bright during the winter months, but it struck me as rather strange that the colour should disappear altogether. On the other hand, have I—to put it colloquially—been 'had'?" There *is* that possibility, for street hawkers of birds are clever at painting up sparrows to represent other finches of higher value; but, before coming to a conclusion, S. C. H. should ruffle the poll feathers and see if there is any colour beneath. The disappearance of the colour in these birds is due to the broad brown edges of the new winter feathers. In a state of freedom these edges get worn away and the colour is again revealed, but sometimes in captivity it never reappears, probably because the conditions under which the bird is kept do not favour the wearing away of these edges. Food: mixed seeds, such as rape, flax, poppy, and a little hemp.

White Rabbit.—"Inquirer" (Greenock) has two white rabbits and would like to know of what breed they are. The parents were bought as Angoras, but lately he has been told they are Russian. He sends me dimensions of body, ear, fur, colour of eye, &c., but I cannot say absolutely from these what they are, though I have a "pious opinion" that they are white varieties of the common Domestic Rabbit. The fur of the Angora is from seven to nine inches long; that of "Inquirer's" is only one inch. By "Russian" his informant probably meant Polish, which is a pure white, but it has not red eyes as "Inquirer's" has, and as the white variety of the Common Rabbit has.

Great Dane.—H. F. Williamson (Ealing) has a Great Dane pup and wishes to know how to feed it, and when it may be kept out of doors. —Until the pup is four months old, it should be fed three times a day; after that twice a day until full-grown, when one meal will suffice, though two may be given without injury. Its food should be a mixed one: bread, potatoes, green vegetables and a little meat being thoroughly mixed together. The amount needed may be roughly calculated by the weight of the pup—an ounce of food being allowed for each pound of the dog's weight. It should always have a large bone to amuse itself with; this is necessary for digestion and to get and keep its teeth in good order, but beware of poultry bones, which may cause choking or other trouble. Good sound dog-biscuits, broken up, will also be good for the pup, which should be taken out for exercise several times a day if possible. It would not be wise to keep the pup out-of-doors before the summer, and then a thoroughly dry, warm, and well-ventilated kennel should be provided.

Preserving Decorations.—A. T. Hurt (Primrose Hill) wants to know how to prevent ivy, &c., used in the Christmas decoration of rooms becoming withered by the action of gas, fire, &c. With the exception of some of the cacti, no plants detached from their roots and the earth can stand exposure to a dry hot atmosphere for long, because evaporation is taking place from the leaves, and there is no longer the means of making up this drain. If I were able to overcome this law of nature, I should probably be running an Imperishable Natural Decoration Company, and, whilst making "a pile," bringing ruin upon all the artificial florists. Sorry I cannot help A. T. H. further than by referring him to such a firm, which will supply imitation sprays and trails warranted to stand for months without getting shabby.

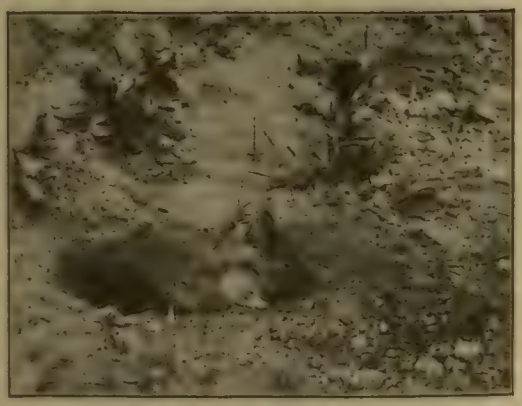
Microscopic.—"De Multa" (Tiverton) in October last "found a small crustacean (?) under a large stone near some still water very close to an ant's nest. It was of a reddish colour, rather darker in front than behind, and covered with small hairs. It had eight legs, and could run backwards or forwards with great rapidity when alarmed." "De Multa" encloses a pencil sketch of its appearance under

the microscope, and a silhouette of the actua size. I have often pointed out the difficulty—sometimes amounting to impossibility—in naming objects from descriptions and imperfect sketches, and I confess that I am quite at a loss for a name for this strange beast. I have put a query mark to the word crustacean, for "De Multa's" statement that it had eight legs only, disposes of that supposition, the crustacea having ten legs. His sketch presents what looks like a hybrid between a crab and a beetle, whilst the silhouette suggests a resemblance to a *Chelifer*, one of the mite family, which in common with spiders

GREAT TIT'S NEST UNDER PLANT POT.
Photo. copyright, The Kearton Stereoscopic Nature Studies.

has eight limbs. I incline to the view that it was some species of *Chelifer*, but I am not prepared to risk my reputation by a definite pronouncement on the point without having the creature before me. "De Multa" also asks what is meant by a microscope having an inch (or ½ inch, ¼ inch, &c.) lens or objective? It is a lens which gives a sharp definition of the object when the latter is that distance removed from it. The grasshopper which was said to have been enclosed in the letter did not reach me, and there was nothing to indicate that it had been included.

Nature Stereographs.—I have received from the Nature Stereographic Company, 145 Fleet Street, London, the first and second series of the Kearton Stereoscopic Studies of Wild Birds and Beasts at Home. Each series con-



YOUNG RABBIT LEAVING NESTING BURROW.
Photo. copyright, The Kearton Stereoscopic Nature Studies.

sists of twelve direct silver prints, selected from the wonderful photographs which have made the Brothers Kearton famous and laid all naturalists under a debt of obligation to them. Many of my readers have had the pleasure of listening to Mr. Richard Kearton's lectures, and have seen some of these photographs exhibited on the screen. They will, therefore, be glad to have the opportunity of possessing some of them, and studying their minute details quietly, in the stereoscope, at home. By the courtesy of the publishers we are enabled to reproduce several of these photos., but it must be understood that a black-and-white block can give only a poor idea of the actual photograph. We cordially recommend these stereographs to our readers.

GREEN LIZARD BITING MAN'S FINGER.
Photo. copyright, The Kearton Stereoscopic Nature Studies.

Carrot-fern.—"Romfordian" (Romford) has read in the "CAPTAIN Club Contributions" an article on growing miniature oaks, and wonders if it is generally known that splendid "ferns" can be grown by taking three or four inches of the thick end of a common Carrot, hollowing out the cut surface to within an inch of the top, hanging this up by string or thread in a sunny window, away from draught, and filling the hollow with water. Numerous fern-like leaves of a splendid green colour soon make their appearance from the lower side and curl up over the carrot. We have given "Romfordian's" directions, somewhat condensed, but we fancy it is a trick known to most of our readers. And really there is no need for so much trouble, for a carrot-seed sown in a flower pot is equally effective, and does not require so much attention.

African Matters.—F. H. Mitchell (Johannesburg) sends me an article from the *Transvaal Leader*, of November 15, on the Locust Pest, which gives an awful picture of this season's invasion, a plague promising to be as bad as anything experienced since 1820. One swarm is reported seven miles long, and a mile in breadth. Trains are held up for hours by these insects. Thanks, F, H. M. I cannot here print the addresses of the leading publishers, because they scarcely come under the head of natural history; but, as a matter of fact, you do not need them. If you address any of them simply, "London," they are all so well known to the Post Office here that they will get your communications without delay. "Primus" (Johannesburg) sends me a thick budget of notes he has written "on the habits and characteristics of the various creatures that inhabit the Kowie Bush and River." Time does not permit me to examine these just now, but I will do so, and if I consider any part would be likely to interest Captainites, I will let them have the benefit of my correspondent's industry.

Broom Moth.—Respecting the note on the caterpillars of this moth in a recent issue, L. S. Metford (Hendon) writes to say that he has been successful in rearing both the green and brown forms by feeding them on the garden Hollyhock. It appears to be very free from prejudice in the matter of food, and to make the most of its opportunities, whatever they are.

SCHOOL DEBATING SOCIETIES.

By O. C. WILLIAMS.

I.

THE CONSTITUTION OF A SOCIETY.

A DEBATING society in which the members are really keen is an institution of immense value in a school or a house: success in the school debating society is frequently the beginning of a great career, and the first taste of the delight of debate has often come to a future member of the House of Commons in the small but fiery gatherings of his school-fellows. The most famous of all school debating societies, "The Eton Society," was a cradle of political enthusiasts in its early days, and in the journal books are speeches in the hand of many famous statesmen, including Mr. Gladstone. But now, owing to several causes, chiefly the growth of athleticism, and may we say?—the transference of real political enthusiasm from the upper to the lower classes, the palmy days of school debating societies seem to be over. I do not mean to say that there are no such things, but from my own experience, and from inquiries among members of other schools, I find that the school debating society has become rather an uninteresting affair, that the debates are apathetic, and that nobody tries to speak. That a keen society cannot exist in a school is not a fact; one society I know has remained with unimpaired keenness from the time it was founded, *i.e.* 1855. Therefore I have thought that a few considerations suggested to me by experience of various debating societies, if set down might be of interest to the readers of THE CAPTAIN.

EACH HOUSE ITS OWN SOCIETY.

In the first place, I am convinced that, in a large school, a school debating society can no longer flourish; such societies at the present day inevitably deteriorate either into apathetic

boredom or rampant athleticism. I am sure that where there are masters' houses, it is the house debating society where there is the greatest hope of duration and the best possibility of keenness. And it is natural that it should be so. In the House all are well known to one another, and so there is little nervousness; besides, this greater degree of acquaintanceship enables the officers to have more authority, which is often needed in a school society. And it is not the least advantage of a house society that its members have no need to go out to the place of meeting, but can gather together in the evening with very little trouble.

With regard to the actual formation of the society there is not much to be said. If the society is being formed for the first time, it is advisable not to collect all the most intellectual beings to be its members, for it often happens that they are the worst speakers.

THE GOOD ALL-ROUND MAN IS USUALLY A GOOD DEBATER,

and you may get as many of his sort as there are. Without any feeling of disrespect, I wish to say that I think a boys' debating society is better without having any master upon it as a permanent member. It cannot be denied that masters often do keep a society going by their own keenness, and prevent its decadence through the departure of old members, but if there is a real spirit of keenness, and the old members take care to fill up their places before they leave, such services are not necessary, and on the other hand, the continual presence of a superior intelligence unavoidably causes a feeling of diffidence. In the society which I referred to before as having lasted since 1855—as I shall have to refer to it again, let us call it the X Society—there were no masters, but they were often asked in as visitors, and they were always very glad to come, many of them, in fact, having been members of the X Society in their youth. I think this is the ideal form of a society, that it should consist of members of the school *in statu pupillari*, and that it should occasionally ask in visitors to speak. Then the speakers, having first gained confidence among themselves, will be put on their metal before visitors. Above all,

ENCOURAGE OLD MEMBERS, BESIDES MASTERS, TO COME TO THE DEBATES.

if they happen to be paying a visit to the school, and make them speak. In the X Society it is an old custom for visitors, on getting up to speak to begin their speech by complimenting the present members on their eloquence in such terms as, "Sir, though I have attended many societies, and assisted at many discussions, never in my life has it been my lot to listen to such fervid eloquence as that to which I have been treated to-night." For further details of the constitution I don't think any society could do better than follow the X Society, though, of course, modifications could be made to suit special cases. The X House contained seventy inmates, and the X Society twenty members. There were only two officers, a president and a secretary, both of whom held posts which were no sinecures. The rule for election of members was that all members of the sixth form, if not elected by ballot, should be members *ex officio*, and that the numbers should be filled up by ballot, all inmates of the House above a certain standard in the School being eligible. The merits of this scheme, as far as personal considerations go, are obvious.* The duties of the president were to summon the meetings, keep order during the debates, and to be the highest authority on all questions which should arise.

THE SECRETARY'S DUTIES

were more laborious. He had to keep the minute book, collect the subjects for debate, put up the list of members to speak, and take down the gist of the speeches of visitors in the book, in which he had to record all proceedings, except the actual speeches of members. Attendance, rightly, was compulsory, with a fine for non-attendance. Two members in succession proposed subjects for debate every week, on which the society voted. The chosen subject was opened by the proposer of it, and the proposer of the rejected motion had to oppose. The secretary then wrote the subject of debate down with the names of proposer and opposer, and underneath four or five names of members, who had to speak at the next meeting. This notice was put up some days before the debate, so that all could prepare their speeches. On the evening of the debate, the speakers spoke in the order of the paper, and after them any member or officer who wished might speak any number of times. By this means it was effected that all had to speak in the course of a term, that the president, presumably an old and tried hand, was not debarred

* *The demerits of the scheme are also obvious. Any member of a house, irrespective of age or "standard in the school," should be admitted to membership of the debating society.—Ed.*

from speaking, and that a real debate was possible through the ability of members to answer the attacks made on them. This, of course, led to high feeling, and this is where the authority of the president was recognised and obeyed. All the members in the X Society had, during the ensuing week,

To Write out their Speeches in the Minute Book

confining themselves strictly to what they did say. This was a hard task, but it has led to the existence of a number of very interesting records, and to read over an old debate is a very instructive occupation. One revenge the members took for this arduous task; at the end of their own speeches, they usually introduced the next speaker with facetious words such as: "Then followed the fiery and impassioned periods of Mr. A.," or "but this effort was totally eclipsed by the cold reasoning and incisive argument displayed by Mr. B."

As I have said, I do not think that any society could improve on those rules of constitution and procedure. But they require real interest and keenness to carry them out, combined with good officers, who know that the society will come down on them for neglecting their duty. As far as rules are concerned, my advice is, Have as few as possible. But it is better to have all questions likely to arise provided for in the rules, as otherwise disputes, which involve personal *animus*, occur, a fact which I know by bitter experience. Therefore, let the rules be revised every few years, so that members may have the chance of putting a stop to abuses, or airing grievances which have arisen in course of time. Whatever rules there are, let them be carried out with all strictness, and I suggest that there should be fines to punish transgressions of them, especially of those against disorder in the society. These rules should be rigidly enforced. The fines should be proposed after due notice in the society, and

The Offending Member should have a Chance of Defending Himself

and the society itself should vote. This gives real power to the officers, and checks the unruly spirit of members. Special care should be exercised with regard to elections; let the ballot be very strictly carried out, or unpleasant consequences may arise. Prejudice should be laid aside as far as possible at elections of new members, for the old must remember that though the new may not be as good as themselves, yet somebody must fill their places. In the election of officers, equal care must be taken. In electing a president the members should select one who is likely to be a good administrator, and one who can enforce his authority. Tact is a quality especially required, and the absence of it caused in the X Society on one occasion a very hot dispute, which created one or two real enemies for the president, who was inclined at times to be rather arbitrary. The secretary should be an industrious person and keen, for on him much of the smoothness of the machinery depends. If there is a subscription, let him be treasurer, but if the society is purely for debating, I should advise the members to have no subscription, or at least only a nominal one, to pay for printing the rules.

II.

Subjects for Debate.

In speaking of subjects for debate it is useless to do more than give a few suggestions. Subjects, both old and new, are easy enough to find for him who thinks, yet it is surprising how unfertile the brain of a member becomes, when it is his turn to propose a subject. The secret is, perhaps, twofold: first, that the stereotyped subjects seem devoid of interest through age; secondly, that to speak adequately on subjects of recent interest demands a certain amount of research on the speaker's part.

The greatest interest always attaches to political subjects, and it will usually be found that members speak better and more spontaneously on them than upon any others. Yet it is a mistake to confine political debates to questions of immediate interest. The problems of bygone history supply excellent matter for debate, and really give greater scope to the speaker, for the amount of information which it is possible for the historian to gather concerning politics of a century or more ago, gives more material for a speech than extracts from newspapers which express the speaker's own political views. General topics, however, if well chosen usually produce very good debates, and give a chance to those who are not ardent politicians to show their powers of speaking. Of course, there are the old stagers that find their way annually into the books of every debating society: and though it must be confessed that there is nothing new to say on them, there is no reason why what has been said before should not be said again, provided the speaker evolves it from his own mind, and does not just copy down an old speech out of the minute book. There are several books containing the *pros*

and *cons* of these τοποι, as the Greek rhetoricians called them, but I think that their influence is, on the whole, pernicious.

FOR THE GREAT VALUE OF A DEBATING SOCIETY IS THAT IT ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO THINK, AND TO EXPRESS THEIR THOUGHTS IN WORDS.

It is foolish to try to get thinking done for you by going to one of these books. You find a set of arguments on one side, and a set of arguments on the other. You have probably decided which side you will take, and you pick out a few arguments on that side, and shut the book without looking at those on the other. You have no means of judging the value of these arguments; they may be solid, or they may be *ex parte* statements: but if you spout them out before the society without reflection, you do yourself no good in the world, and contribute very little to the debate. If it really *is* necessary for any one to seek ideas in such books, let him at least compare the arguments on each side carefully, and then choose the point on which he feels he can make a stand. But better even than that is to sit down and solidly think of the subject oneself: he who does so may arrive at a wrong conclusion, but he is pretty sure to see his mistake after the debate, and he will have benefited both himself and the society very greatly, if he can make a clear speech explaining his own view and the reasons which led him to take it. I counsel members to be very careful as to the wording of the announcement of a debate; if they feel incompetent to draft it properly, they should procure the assistance of somebody who can. Unless the meaning is perfectly clear, those who cogitate upon the subject will certainly be confronted by some doubt, and it completely vitiates a debate when the opposer has prepared to do battle on a totally different issue from that intended by the opener, or when he relies on quibbles over clumsy wording for his opposition. Remember, it is of no use to put up such a notice as this: "Subject for debate. The Inadvisability of Home Rule for Ireland." The subject should always be in the form of a motion, such as. "In the opinion of this House, Home Rule for Ireland is inadvisable."

PROPOSERS OF SUBJECTS SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO WORD THEM TOO STRONGLY

or they will alienate their supporters: they can supply all the necessary violence in their own speeches. To move that "The Irish are unworthy of a voice in their own government" is to lose the motion inevitably in any fair-minded society. (*N.B.* These specimen subjects are merely *exempli gratia*.) In voting on subjects for debate the great bane of school societies is the uncontrolled bias towards frivolity. If some rather absurd subject be proposed, or any chance of a personal attack on existing institutions given, that subject often carries the day. But the society which has the self-control to reject mere catch-penny motions, to keep to questions worthy of debate, and by the force of public spirit to compel members to take trouble over their speeches, that society will never fall into decay. The X Society has an excellent institution for eliminating the too frivolous element, that is, the "rag" debate, held on an average once or twice a year, at which a most ridiculous motion is proposed, or a solemn subject treated in a ridiculous manner. By this means free play is given to the love of "ragging" inherent in the school-boy, and it is exhausted so completely in one evening, that it does not obtrude itself at other times On one occasion a violent legitimist moved that "King Charles the First of England was a Saint and Martyr," and after a truculent and (to the other side) very amusing speech, in which

THOSE WHO WERE HOSTILE TO THE MOTION WERE BRANDED AS MURDERERS,

the mover, an eccentric being, sat convulsively tearing his handkerchief into shreds, while the opposer replied in a damaging speech, the main argument of which was that the Stuarts had "bottle-noses." On another occasion—this was after a convivial supper—a gentleman, in moving the interesting motion "That it is not," analysed the word "it" with a minuteness of etymology worthy of Professor Max Müller. I do not say that these absurdities are necessary to a society; far from it, the society that can do without them is to be congratulated; yet they are a convenient outlet for surplus spirits which might at other times be a cause of disturbance. I think that proper parliamentary language ought always to be used, that all slang words such as "rot"—which is really much less effective than "the idle fancies of a depraved imagination"—should be rigidly barred, and that personal abuse, if used at all, should be confined to the forms allowed in the Houses of Parliament. The president should be very alert to enforce all points of order. He should only allow one speaker to rise at a time, namely, the one who has caught his "eye," and should stop all remarks and asides from other members, though applause and disapprobation may be allowed expression in the

usual way. There are always some members of a society who look at things in a rather too serious light. They are of a somewhat Spartan temperament, and object to such Athenian levities as "rag" debates or the adoption of a cynical tone on a question of serious import. These are usually rather inferior speakers, and not remarkable for common sense; narrow-minded people are usually devoid of that commodity. However, these members are liable to cause serious discord in a society if not humoured to a certain degree. It is really a very little thing for a member to choke down a little indignation at a stupid and mistaken speech on the part of one of these, and it saves any amount of discord. A few simple words will show up the member to the rest of the society. To these members I would say—uselessly, I know—that a personal spirit should be kept very much in the background in a debating society.

One last point: it is a mistake to protract a debate when it is obviously exhausted; but if the president has power to adjourn the meeting, he should be extremely careful to avoid a semblance of improper use of this power: if he is able he should sum up the arguments at the end of the debate, and put the question in the usual way.

I venture to hope that some points which I have brought out may be of assistance both to full-grown and to embryo societies.

ABOUT BULL-FIGHTS.

By ENRIQUE DE CRIJALVA. Photos by his Brother.

THE ENTRANCE OF THE TOREROS INTO THE ARENA.

THE PICADOR ADVANCING ON THE BULL.

FROM time to time I have seen in the papers descriptions of bull-fights, sent by correspondents during the course of a holiday tour on the Continent. Hardly one appeared to me correct in any detail, which is not a surprise, as one must be a thorough foreigner to be able to appreciate and understand the niceties of the sport.

The general body of English-reading people have not witnessed a bull-fight, so that they are obliged to model their opinions according to the views and opinions of those who have.

These opinions are mostly narrow and prejudiced from the first, so that the ordinary visitor goes away with the impression that bull-fighting is barbarous and a relic of old inquisitorial customs.

Such is far from being the case, and I would in this article, if not justify, at least explain what real bull-fighting is.

First of all, to see a bull-fight in all its pomp and glory one must go to the home of such games: to Spain. There one can form a true idea of the corrida, or races, as they are

called. The excited crowds gesticulating and encouraging, the brilliant colours of the ladies, the picturesque sombreros of the men, under the blazing sun, with the life and death struggle going on in the arena, combine to make up a picture not only worth seeing as a novel experience, but also as an insight into the lives and habits of the Spaniards themselves.

On some special day, when a popular

THE CHULO ATTRACTING THE ATTENTION OF THE BULL.

favourite is present, one can readily imagine, as one gazes around the large amphitheatre in which thousands and thousands are following with rapt attention the different movements of the hero of the day, what the gladiatorial combats must have been like in the days of Ancient Rome.

I do not pretend in this article to give the reader a thorough explanation of the game, but just an insight into the national sport of Spain. The accompanying photos will explain much. What I would like to emphasise is that the sport *is* a sport, and not cruel bull-baiting, as is so commonly believed. The men who appear in the arena are artists in their way, and every move they make whilst they are before the public is made according to the rules laid down now for hundreds of years in the code of their art. Not only do they know them, but the spectators are as well versed as matadors in the rules of the game. The slightest deviation on the part of the latter would bring down general indignation on their heads and endanger their reputations for ever.

The matador is the chief actor in the bull-fight, and his play consists in facing the bull and describing a number of figures whilst eluding the terrible horn-thrusts of the animal.

The matador is always accompanied by his "quadrilla," or company of men, who help him in the work. Generally he has one understudy, or "sobresaliente," who kills the bull if anything happens to the matador himself, and also four "bandarilleros," or men who place the "bandarillas," and two "picadors," or men who, on horseback, keep the bull off by the aid of long, stout lances with a spike on the end, which keeps the lance from slipping.

A bandarilla is a fairly long stick all decorated with coloured paper and tinsel, on the end of which is placed an iron hook. The bandarillero takes two of these, one in each hand, and places himself in front of the bull, which at once dashes at him. He, holding the bandarillas firmly, high above his head, plants them on the bull's neck, and evades the horns of the bull by quietly stepping on one side as the animal rushes past. These movements have a peculiar grace, and the calm daring of the man whom one expects to see trampled to death or tossed in the air makes a spectacle of keen interest. The feeling of relief on seeing the man safe and smiling when the bull has passed expresses itself in a burst of wild applause.

Sometimes the matador, when publicly requested, takes up the bandarillas himself, but he rarely does so. He confines his work to most graceful "passes de capa," or play with

THE BANDARILLERO IN THE ACT OF PLANTING THE DART IN THE NECK OF THE BULL.

what we may describe as a red rag or cloak. These passes are made according to set rules dating back to antiquity, and are followed with interest by the "aficionados," or amateurs, who, by the different movements of the rag, distinguish which pass he is going to throw.

To make use of both bandarillas and pica

is considered brutal, but the Spaniards say that the skin of these bulls is so tough that the pain is insignificant. That may be, but all the same this is a weak point in their defence of bull-fighting.

The most cruel part is the killing of the horses. The bulls generally find means to kill six or seven in an afternoon, and when very fierce have often killed as many as from *fifteen to twenty*. Some horses die in the arena, but more often are led away to be killed outside. For this there is no excuse, except that it has always been an established thing, and that a bull-fight would not be complete without horses.

I do not pretend to induce readers to like bull-fighting, which is a thing that must be "bred in the bone" as it were.

The matador, when he thinks that the bull is sufficiently "prepared," comes forward to deal the final stroke that will mean death. The bull, fatigued and sullen, advances slowly upon the matador, whose sword is hidden beneath the muleta, or covering, and who awaits a favourable opportunity, and then, like a flash, drives the sword up to the hilt into the neck of the bull, which falls, a lifeless mass, at his feet. Amidst the cheers and bravos of the crowd, a team of gaily-decorated mules is driven in, the dead bull is hooked on

THE MATADOR MANŒUVRING THE BULL INTO A POSITION FAVOURABLE FOR A STROKE.

behind, and is dragged out—to make way for another.

Six bulls generally appear in an afternoon, but on great occasions, such as when the King attends, as many as twelve will appear, until the honoured guest to whom the entertainment is offered is fatigued or declares he has seen enough.

Two matadors and their respective quadrillas are the usual number that appear on ordinary occasions, but as many as six have been known to perform at a time. The bull-fights take place every Sunday afternoon, starting at about four o'clock and coming to

THE MATADOR IN THE ACT OF AIMING FOR HIS STROKE.

an end a little before six. The Spanish matador's costume is a marvel of gold work and embroidery, and £100 hardly covers the cost of one outfit.

The matadors make large fortunes in a short while. Among the most famous of the past and present was Frascuelo, who died a few years ago possessed of much property. He was so celebrated that his last moments were watched with breathless anxiety by the whole nation. Such was the popular feeling that the Queen Mother herself had perforce to enquire often after his health and to be represented at his funeral. It is reported, however, that she, personally, does not approve of bull-fights. King Alfonso has a decided taste for the game, and this is fortunate, for, in the uncertain rule of such an unstable country, a king who did not take his full share in the national sport would soon find his popularity on the wane.

The cry of the Spaniards was once, in a memorable revolution, "*Pan y toros*!" "Bread and bulls!" which are to them the necessities of life. Perhaps the secret of the degeneration of their race, as a distinct nationality, lies in the Spanish love of play and idleness.

The Informer ::

BY FRED SWAINSON

A PUBLIC SCHOOL STORY.

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell.

SYNOPSIS.

This story deals with the mystery enveloping Dick Erpingham, a fellow who comes to Harford School at the age of eighteen and vouchsafes no particulars as to his antecedents. The previous chapters describe how, through his agency, Jim Mordaunt, the school's best cricketer, gets into trouble with the headmaster. Bill Kent takes up the cudgels on behalf of his friend Mordaunt, and, whilst reading the public school cricket notes in "Wisden," obtains the information that Erpingham was formerly at Stonehurst School. He promptly wires to an acquaintance at Stonehurst for information about Erpingham, and just as Firmin (who tells the story) and Erpingham are starting off to spend a week-end in London with their friends the Yorkes, Firmin receives a note from Kent directing him to ask Erpingham "why he is so fond of cripples."

CHAPTER XXI.

A DRAMATIC INCIDENT.

FORCING a gaiety I did not feel, I went up to London with Dick, and at Yorke's the welcome was such as made me forget my foreboding of coming trouble. Captain Yorke was in town, and I never wish to meet a jollier man. In the evening, as Yolande had suggested, we four went to the theatre, though I had been quite content to sit and listen to Yolande's father's chat. He was a mighty fisher and, well—when a man has fished as he had, I am quite content to sit at his feet, so to speak. But, providentially, Yolande was determined, so, after dinner, as I say, we jingled along Regent Street, were held up at the Circus, and finally disentangled in Coventry Street. At Daly's we went to our seats, and within five minutes the merry nonsense of the piece had made me forget everything except what was going on on the stage. My friends were in a like happy mood. Rather late, probably half an hour after the curtain had gone up, two young men squeezed past us to their seats further down our tier. I noticed them rather particularly; they were both rather fine specimens of Saxon youth, and each had the unmistakable look, turn, and swing of the public school boy. I just glanced at Dick across Yolande—as much as to say: "There goes a pair who might have been Harfordians." I got no answering look from Dick: the ruddy flush of health was gone, and instead an ashen pallor was on his cheeks. He was staring at the late comers, who were settling in their seats, never taking his eyes off them. When they sat down and the intervening stalls blotted them from view, he gave a little gasp, and on my honour I thought he was going to collapse where he sat. Whatever was the matter? Was he suddenly taken ill? Yolande was leaning forward, all eyes and ears on the stage, and Agnes, who was on my right, was smiling her usual placid smile. Neither girl had noticed Dick's emotion.

I leaned towards Dick and whispered: "What's the matter?"

He hardly seemed to hear me, and then, all at once stretching out his hand, he gripped my shoulder with such strength that I almost called out with the pain.

"Did you notice that fellow, Frank—the last?" he said, in low, tense whisper.

"Yes," said I.

"He wasn't a cripple, was he?"

I never want to hear such pain in any one's voice as I heard in Dick's low whisper.

"Heaven forbid," said I, almost jumping at that ominous word—the word Kent had written me a few hours before. "No more a cripple than you."

A momentary flush of joy dyed Dick's pallid face, but faded almost as quickly, leaving him ghastly white again.

"Was he—was he lame?"

"Not a bit."

"Did he limp——?"

"Look here, Dick," I whispered back, "the last fellow looked a remarkably healthy specimen of the public school man. And," I added impatiently, "I'm no good at riddles."

Dick's hand dropped from my shoulder, and he sank back into this chair. He seemed frozen by a haunting dread, and yet every now and then over the fear there passed something which was not like fear at all—for want of a better word I may say hope—yes, a yearning hope. He kept his eyes on the stage, and when Yolande turned to him as some precious piece of nonsense amused her, he smiled mechanically and murmured almost inaudibly. Dick's thoughts were not in the theatre at all—except when, as though impelled by an overwhelming desire, he leaned forward and looked along our row of stalls. I'm very certain he had forgotten there were such persons as Yolande, Agnes, or I. I was vaguely miserable, infinitely puzzled. Luckily, the girls, absorbed in the comedy, noticed nothing. At length the finale of the first act arrived, the jolly music crashing out in great floods of sound. The end of it reached, the curtain came down with a run, the full flood of the electrics was switched on, and many men, after a whispered word or two with their friends, tilted back their seats and strolled out into the corridors for a cigarette.

"What a jolly piece," said Yolande, to me.

"Oh! rather," said I, feebly. I wasn't attending to her, but had my eye on Dick. He was watching those two late comers pass out at the other end of the stalls, with an intensity which was painful to see. His eyes were riveted on them, and as they went out with the crowd through the swing doors, he rose himself, canted up his seat, and, with a hurried apology to us all, hurried after them. He was as white as a ghost.

Yolande looked at me in consternation when she saw Dick's face. "What is the matter, Frank?"

"Don't know, Yolande. I think Dick knows those men who came in late."

"He looks upset," said Agnes.

I put my mind into small talk for the girl each side of me, and kept them amused, though, I fancy, Yolande was a trifle annoyed at Dick's abrupt departure. The bell rang, and the men came flocking back, lights flooded behind the curtain, the orchestra burst into a rollicking march, the curtain was looped up: but no Dick appeared. I saw one of the youths whose entrance had so disturbed Erpingham return and follow the play with interest as placid as Agnes's, but his friend's *fauteuil* was vacant. At the end of ten minutes the swing door opened, and in came Dick and the other. The stranger sidled past us with a murmured apology, and Dick dropped into his place. His face was burning bright, and in his eyes was a joy, a gladness, almost an ecstasy.

"Dick," said Yolande, with an attempt at a pout, "you've been very rude. I won't forgive you. Frank's worth a dozen of you."

"He is," said Dick, quickly. "Two dozen. Yolande, wasn't it you who chose this theatre?"

"Yes," said Yolande.

"Well, Yolande, whether you forgive me or not, I'll love you all my life for that."

"I'll be very very careful next time then," said Yolande, laughing. "Now, Dick, be quiet."

Dick was quiet—but it was a quiet utterly different from his former frozen silence. He looked at me sometimes, his eyes beaming with happiness, but I possessed my soul in patience followed the play, received Yolande's comments on the wit which came across the footlights; and when, finally, the last chords had died away and the stalls were reaching for hats and wraps, I looked upon a sort of nightmare evening as coming to an end.

While the girls were getting their cloaks and wraps Dick introduced me to the man with whom he had returned into the theatre after the interval. "Burton thinks of coming down to Harford, Frank, to see us 'in our habit as we live.' We'll show him round?"

"Delighted," said I.

Dick was little good for small talk as we rolled silently through the crowded, brilliant streets: he stared fixedly out of the window, busy with his own thoughts. He looked happier than I had ever seen him. When I thought of Bill Kent and his venomous threats, I was more than ever confirmed in my opinion to say nothing of him until we got back to Harford.

As for Dick's behaviour at the theatre, as he did not volunteer an explanation, I did not ask for one, I was content to bide my time.

CHAPTER XXII.

LEAF INTERVIEWS KENT.

ON Monday Dick and I were back in Harford in time for second school. Kent contrived to waylay me as I returned to Crosse's. He was heavily jocose. "Back again, Toothpick! Enjoy yourself?"

"No end," said I.

"The other half too, I suppose? Ignorance is bliss, you see, Toothpick. Well, Erpingham came here—at least, I have been told so fifty times—to patch up his lack of knowledge. He'll know something that will surprise him before he goes to bed this night. There's to be a little meeting of Crosse's fellows after tea. Then he'll hear just at what Harford values fellows of his pious breed. It's a pretty story, a pretty, pretty tale."

"Then you're not the fellow to tell it, Kent," said I, keeping up my end, though my real feelings were of unrest and disquiet for Dick and of an almost intolerable loathing of the sneering fellow in front of me. Then a sudden thought struck me. "Does Jim know of this hocus-pocus?"

"No fear," said Kent, with a look of savage understanding.

"Whatever dirty business you have on hand, Kent, you'd better take Jim's advice—and drop it."

"Exactly, Toothpick. Mordaunt is curiously squeamish about things like this. He doesn't know how to treat animals. I believe in a thorough squash."

"Well," said I, turning away, "be sure it *is* a squash."

Kent's face lit up with wicked joy. "A thorough squash it will be. You'll be there, I hope?"

"IT'S A PRETTY STORY."

"You're making a mistake, Kent."

"I'll take the risk, old fellow," he said in his silkiest drawl.

"What's Bill Kent want Crosse's seniors for after tea?" asked Gale.

"Don't really know. Seems he's got an attack of Erpinghamania again."

"Pah!" said Gale, screwing up his mouth in distaste. "I thought Erpingham would be left alone now. Don't think I'll turn up for one."

"I shall though," said I savagely.

"Does your friend know?"

"No," said I, "nor care either."

In the course of that morning I made up my mind to give Dick a hint, though, mind, I was three parts ashamed of saying anything to him. I would not have breathed a word to him of this sneaking scandal, but Kent seemed abominably happy, and when *he* was hilarious honest men had better be on their guard.

So I went to Harbour's and was half-relieved, half-sorry, when I heard that Dick was out, coaching Bottle and Co. most probably. Returning to my room, I found Bob Leaf there. "That pig has got hold of something, Firmin. All the house is buzzing. Wouldn't I like to put the 'screw' on him!" Bob's tone was bloodthirsty.

"A lot of good that would do, Bob. Go and and play footer."

"If I see Kent, Firmin. I'll tell him something."

"Go and play footer," I advised again. "Kent is an awkward customer to deal with."

Bob flung out thinking me too apathetic, too lukewarm for further consideration, and I, deeming study too irksome and moping too unutterably miserable, trudged down to the boathouse across the fields. I meant to have an hour's fishing from the end of my punt, which, fastened to the float, sagged gently a foot or two with the current.

My luck was dead out: the fish were not moving. Not a solitary pilgrim swam into my ken. After half an hour of this cold expectation I thought I'd better wind up and go back: it really was not worth while defying the bitter February east wind, and I did not feel keen enough on the sport to think a change of berth worth the moving of the rypecks. Whilst I was thus gloomily unjointing, an odd sort of murmur reached me: it came in little gusts, stopping and then recommencing, and between the murmurs the silence was intense. The recurring noise puzzled me somewhat: then all in a moment the solution reached me. Some one was talking not far away from me. Having arrived at this conclusion, I slid my rod into its cover and stepped on to terra-firma.

As I came out from under the lee of the boathouse I glanced carelessly down the towing-path. At the gate leading out of the boathouse field fifty yards away I saw some one leaning up against the bars of the gate and another, standing a little further off, with his back towards me. Then I recognised the Harfordian cap, and, my curiosity sharpened, I gave the twain a long stare, after which I dropped my rod and went pegging towards them full speed. The two Harfordians were Kent and Leaf.

The pool incident flashed across my mind. Something of the same sort seemed happening now. Kent's face was very white. His lips were drawn straight, his eyes alone seemed alive. Bob came towards me hurriedly. He could hardly speak, but motioned me away as though I had been the callowest of callow Harfordians and he nothing less than Forder himself. "Let me alone, Firmin," he sputtered. "I can manage Kent myself."

The absurdity of the speech hardly struck me then, and I don't believe Bob has, now, any very clear notion of his overwhelming attitude as he strode towards me.

"What is the matter?" said I.

"I've told Kent what a cad he is, Firmin. Trying to hound Erpingham out of Harford—the best fellow in it!"

"That every decent chap knows," said I; "but now you've said it you'll come home with me," and I took Bob by the arm to drag him away.

Bob for one moment had it in him to resist, but the next he strode along by my side, his head erect, his face flaming. We had not gone a dozen yards when I heard a groan behind me. I turned round quickly. Kent's right arm was encircling the top bar of the gate: he had slewed half round and his head was on his arm. "Whatever is the matter?" I asked Bob sternly.

"The brute has hurt himself," said Leaf fiercely. "Let him groan."

"Your work?

"No."

I hobbled quickly back and Bob, who had taken a step or two forward, stayed where he was.

"What is the matter, Kent?"

"My ankle: it's broken, I think."

"Broken. How?"

"I slipped trying to jump over this gate. Could you get my boot off, Firmin? It tortures."

I knelt down beside him and, gently as I could, cut the laces. Even through the sock I could see something was wrong: the ankle was fearfully swollen. It hardly wanted Kent's blanched face to tell me he was in agony. He said, half closing his eyes from sheer pain, "Will you send some one down, Firmin?"

I shouted for Bob, who merely put his hands in his pockets and stared savagely at us both. I scrambled up hastily and went to him. "Bob, we must help Kent home."

"Not I," said Leaf. "I would not touch him. Let him stay there."

"Leaf," I said harshly, "whatever Kent may be, now he is in agony. His leg is broken, I think."

"Serve him right," said Bob. "He was coming direct to school to hound Erpingham out, if he could. I'll not help him home for that."

"Come," I said, giving Bob a certain sort of look.

"Not I," he said again with savage doggedness.

"Ah! then," I said, with scorn I didn't disguise, "carry my crutch."

That started Bob: he came with me, and he helped lift Kent gently enough. Kent set his teeth and bore the agonising jerks with stoical fortitude. Had you seen our team of three moving slowly over the fields, you would have said we were three friends whispering secrets to one another. Bob and I had each an arm round

our common foe, who, with head bowed and face set, dragged himself along with his sound foot. None of us said a word, but you may guess our thoughts were busy. As we passed the infirmary I said, "We'd better go in here, Kent."

"Yes," said Kent briefly, and we turned in at the gate. Dr. Brownhill was coming down the path as we entered. "Ah!" was all he said as he took us in with his quick glance. He gently relieved me of my share of Kent, and it was in his strong arms that Crosse's senior was carried within.

Leaf and I were for going out as soon as Brownhill was in charge, but as he came out into the hall to hang up his coat and hat, he said, "Kent wants to see you a moment."

I went in to the receiving-room, taking Bob along with me. Kent was in a chair, looking ghastly enough in all conscience. He turned to me: "Thanks, Firmin. But for you I should have been in a hole. And you, Leaf, too."

Bob glared at him without softening an iota.

Then Kent gave us one of his grim, sardonic smiles: "And the Erpingham affair will have to stand over. But it will keep."

Out on the gravel, Leaf said, "The brute!"

"What were you and Kent doing on the towing-path?" I asked.

"I'd been looking for Kent everywhere, after I left you."

"Whatever for?"

Leaf hesitated . . . not because he wanted to be secretive, but because he couldn't find the right word. "I wanted to—to—argue with him."

"You young idiot! Kent is not the sort of fellow for a fire-eating salamander like you to argue with! Was it about Erpingham?"

"Of course! What else had I to talk to him about? I was told he had gone to Gleam for some gloves, and that, if I wanted to see him very much, I'd probably meet him on the tow path. I found him all right, and we talked over that gate. He jeered at me, at you, and at Erpingham, and then, when I told him just what he was, he tried to vault over to get at me. He foozled on the top bar and came down an awful purler. That is really all. Only, when he'd got his senses back, he asked me to help him home. That's Kent. Now, *I* would have died rather than ask *him*. I said I would if he'd leave Erpingham alone. He smiled at me, sick as he was, just as he did when we left him just now. I meant to let him stay there."

I believe Bob did mean that: exactly that.

I did not know whether to be glad or sorry that Kent's meeting was postponed, but I think glad on the whole.

I said nothing to Dick, except that Kent had gone into hospital with a damaged leg, but went to Mordaunt's study to tell him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MORDAUNT MUST WORK.

AS I was knocking fruitlessly at Mordaunt's door, Gale came out of his study, and when I told the footer captain of Kent's accident, his face lengthened as long as the proverbial fiddle. "Jove! that makes two. Jim's out of the eleven, and now Kent's crocked."

"'Crocked' is rather mild, old fellow," said I, gravely. "He has either dislocated his ankle or broken his leg."

"Well, I'm no end sorry for Bill," said Gale. "Anyhow, his rotten meeting is U P."

"Oh! quite," said I. "It's postponed *sine die*. But what is this about Jim?"

"What!" gasped Gale. "Haven't you heard? Ah! you were away the week-end. Well, Jim's as good as left."

"Left Harford?" I echoed. "No row?" and my mind went to Kent as though he were the natural perch for evil tidings.

"Don't know, really, Frank, but I fancy it is some family matter. Anyhow," he continued, gravely, "don't you think, on the whole, it would be better for Jim, if he did go? He's fooling. And Kent, though he's all right in his way, in the field, is not quite Jim's mark. Jim's by nature, one of our high-flyers and Kent—well, he's hardly that. Unless Jim gets on to his old track, as in pre-Erpingham days, he'd really better go. By the way, he asked me to tell you he called in your study to say 'good bye.'"

"He's gone then, already?" I asked, really sick at heart to think that my old friend had vanished out of my existence.

"Don't quite know, Frank. I think he'll come down to wind up. He said he'd write."

As a matter of fact, as I was preparing to flit across to Harbour's for an afternoon grind with Dick next day, I saw Jim's familiar figure coming up the High. He was in civilian clothes. I hobbled towards him hurriedly. "I saw Gale last night, Jim. Thanks for remembering me. Nothing serious, I hope?"

"Well, it's pretty bad, Frank."

"Are you going?"

"No," he said gloomily. "But I wish I

were. Tell you later, Frank I'm due at Forder's in five minutes."

He hurried off. When I came back from Harbour's I found a little note on my table from Mrs. Mordaunt. Would I call in at Jim's study? I went in and found Mrs. Mordaunt alone.

She was dressed in black and looked pale and ill, but she rose from her chair before the fire and gave me her hand, and broke out into her old kind smile.

"How are you, Frank? What an age since I saw you! Jim's with Mr. Crosse, but I said you'd see me to the station?"

"Oh! rather," said I, flushing with pleasure.

"I did not mean to leave Harford this time until I'd seen you, Frank. Are you and Jim friends again?" she asked, looking at me with her motherly smile.

"I hope so. I never think of Jim but as a friend."

"Be one, Frank: Jim needs a friend now, at least." And she added, almost savagely, "Not Kent—nor such as he."

"I'm not Kent," said I quietly.

"Well, sit down, Frank. I've only ten minutes and then we must catch the fast train."

In that short ten minutes Mrs. Mordaunt told me something that made me miserable. In a nutshell it was this. . . . If Jim did not win a scholarship out of Harford, she was afraid she could not possibly send him to Oxford.

"There's the Brownjohn," said I, eagerly.

"Yes," said she. "He must try to win the Brownjohn. He is coming back to his old school to try for that. And, Frank, I'm afraid he's been wasting his time since—for months. Jim is clever—though I am his mother, I may say that—but no one can waste a year in this world without suffering for it. However, he is to try—and I want you and him to be as you used to be. Let the firm be Erpingham, Firmin and Mordaunt, Frank."

"I should like it of all things," said I.

"Thanks, Frank. Now I must go."

Together we went to the station, and I saw her go to town, cheerful and kind as ever.

I let Dick know on the morrow as we went slowly to first school. "Jim's to try for the Brownjohn—his only chance."

"Eh?" said Dick, turning round and looking at me keenly.

"The Brownjohn's the only way for him to go to Oxford," I repeated, returning Erpingham's glance.

"Well, I'm out of it now," said Erpingham, instantly.

"HE CAME DOWN AN AWFUL PURLER."

"So am I, old chap."

"I owe Mordaunt that," he said gravely. "Though," he added, with a slight blush, "it seems horrible cheek to suggest that my standing down would be any convenience to him."

"Now, that's rot, Dick," I said. "My solid opinion is that you'll get the Brownjohn if you take it. Your maths are quite four square to all the winds that blow."

And I meant what I said, every word. For I shall always consider that such talent as Dick Erpingham had will always stand the best chance in an examination that is not highly specialised. He had good all round abilities; he had a taste for one or two subjects, yet—and this is perhaps the point—he did not feel so inordinately "gone" over them as to neglect other work; and he could peg away until it was time to knock off. The rather-good fellow who can follow a time-table shall always be my man.

"Rubbish! Frank," said Dick. "Aren't you, Harford's top sawyer, in for it?"

"There are others in it—I believe MacWhirter and Barry. Good job we did not enter officially. Jim would never have stomached our standing down."

"Think not: too jolly well like beastly patronage," said Erpingham, hotly. "But it's lucky as it is. Mordaunt mustn't know."

"What about your pater, Dick?"

"I'll write after first school. If pater is keen, I'm awfully sorry for him. But I think I know him: if I pull off the Arts he'll be more than satisfied."

Then, wonderfully relieved by Dick's decision, I called on Jim, and, I may say here, though it has nothing to do with this story, that Jim and I had our explanations and buried all bitterness. We were to be as in pre-Erpingham days. I got more than a grain of comfort out of Jim's final words: "I've no occasion to like Erpingham, Frank, but anything I have to say to him I can say to his face. I don't know what Bill has to say about him, and I would not have had anything to do with his meeting. And now you say his leg is pretty bad. He'll be in hospital for a time, eh? I must call."

"Good job," I said unfeelingly.

That day saw the entrance of Jim Mordaunt into the ranks of the reading men. He sported his oak: footer Meads saw him no more. The school witnessed his eclipse with far different feelings from those they bestowed upon the average smug. Jim, the hero of many a Harfordian victory, was in low water, and the Brownjohn was his one hope of safety: not one in the school but wished him safe. Crosse's saw his shut study door with feelings of intense satisfaction. Their idol had commenced a stern chase for honours.

Gale said to me, "I'm no end glad that Jim is working, of course, but his going has cut the very heart out of the team. Our forward string is a tangle without him in the centre. Gilchrist's play makes us ache. There's only one Jim."

"Jim's doing loads better as he is," said I, briefly.

Dick came round to Crosse's a day or two after. "Frank, great news! The pater thinks I've done right to cut out of the Brownjohn. Doesn't say it just like that, of course—catch a governor who would—but it amounts to that. And," Dick shot this out, "he says he'd like me to play footer if I'm keen on it."

"Then you jolly well ought to, Dick," I said, glowing. "Gale was grumbling no end about Gilchrist's performance forward. You're a forward, aren't you? Take Jim's place. It will use up no more time than refereeing and coaching Harbour's lot. I can trust you now, old fellow. Smugging, pothunting, and exams. have bitten into your bones."

"I can trust myself too, Frank," said Dick quietly. "So I think I'll play. Gilchrist is a winger, pure and simple. Let's go and find Gale."

I could not get down to Meads that afternoon, for Jim had asked me to rough out a time-table for him and to N.B. his classics, and he and I were busy whilst the eleven were flitting about on the soft spring turf.

I was so anxious to hear how Dick had acquitted himself on Meads, that I went to Gale's study and curled up in his chair until that worthy had had his bath and come in to tea, pink and clean.

"Ah! you want to know about your pal, eh?" he said, drawing up his chair and smiling a satisfied smile in my direction. "Well, the long and the short of it is—*we didn't miss Jim.* I say again, we didn't miss Jim. If any fellow had told me we shouldn't this morning I should have called him horrible names. Some of his passes out to Gilchrist were superb; and he's abominably fresh. When he fairly got the hang of the pair on each side of him, how the line went along! Tell you something, Frank—and you may sleep on it quite securely—if we had Jim and Erpingham centre and inside left, or otherwise, so long as they were alongside, we'd lick the old Carthusians in our last match—a thing we haven't done for ten years. That's something to dream about. Anyhow, I've given him his colours."

"His colours!" I echoed.

"Well, there was nothing else to do, Frank," said the footer captain, simply.

CHAPTER XXIV.

KENT *v.* ERPINGHAM.

I OWN I was puzzled when Dick announced that he was going to play. What had induced him to change, so suddenly, his fixed attitude of strict aloofness from games? His father? That hypothesis did not altogether satisfy me. Fathers would rather have their sons bookworms than footer players. Somehow, though I could give no reasonable explanation of it, I felt instinctively that Dick's curious adventure at Daly's had something to do with it.

Be that as it may, Erpingham's first appearance on Harford's fields as a player was the sensation of the Easter term. Fellows, who had

seen his game, noised their opinions abroad among those who hadn't, and, when Gale gave him his colours at the conclusion of the first match, there was a universal gasp of amazement. Had Gale not possessed the reputation of having one of the coolest heads in the school, Harfordians might excusably have fancied that the captain had had a sudden stroke, or something equally bewildering. The school determined to be in at the next match, private games or no private games, and judge for themselves, from Dick's play, whether Gale's sanity could be questioned. Harbour's crowd came in a solid knot: the house sent its full strength, juniors and seniors, and, when I pegged down to the centre, the band opened out and let me into its midst. I was looked upon almost as a Harbour Light. The game was Town *v.* School, a match which was considered, from its invariable keenness, an excellent preparation for the last of our fixtures, Harford *v.* Old Carthusians—the match that mattered. I'm bound to say Dick opened my eyes; the way he threaded in and out, drawing the halves and then swinging out to his wings, was Jim's form to a hair; was Jim's form on his best day. Bottle and Anson and Bob Leaf led the chorus of triumphant shouts. That Town game swept away any lingering doubts as to Erpingham's position. When he turned in at Harbour's he was a Force.

As I moved away from the touchline, a well-known, detested voice reached me. "How are you, Toothpick?"

I turned sharply round and saw Kent. I said civilly, "How's the foot?"

"All serene, dear boy. Behold." Kent dropped a hypothetical ball at his foot and his leg flew into the air. He shaded his eyes to watch the imaginary flight. "That's over the bar, Toothpick. Four points. But, as a matter of fact, my foot was nothing like as damaged as I thought. Brownhill had it right in a brace of shakes. He pulled it out, and he twisted it over, and there I was, when I saw things again, on my back in bed and my foot as comfy as possible. I asked him how it was that a mild dislocation (I won't swear that is the right word), hurt so horribly, and he said, like the oracle at Delhi—oh, Delphos then—'It's the little things that hurt the most, young man.' Now if that isn't oracular I'll eat my hat. But out of evil, good. Is that a quote? So sorry. I've had a fortnight at home."

"Anything else?" said I, looking Kent fair and square in the eyes.

"You mean about 'Wisden'?"

"About Erpingham," I said steadily.

Kent spoke with most unusual solemnity. "When I came back this morning I meant to give Crosse's your friend's unvarnished history. But I don't think I shall, now."

"May I ask why?"

Kent swept his hand over the footer field where, a few minutes since, the School had been particularly busy with the Town. "Your friend's the best centre the School has had; he is better than Jim. Footer is in his very boot-laces."

"That is a rotten reason, Kent," said I solemnly. "There are better reasons than that."

"And, Toothpick, I heard what you said to Leaf when that young cub wouldn't give me a hand up. I think I might have waited there for hours but for you. So I owe you one for that."

"That's a trifle better," said I. "But . . ."

"Look here, Firmin," interrupted Kent, eyeing me grimly, "I don't value 'pi' that much. Your way isn't mine. But I have a code of my own, all the same. I like a man, and Erpingham was one five minutes ago. Good-bye."

Kent turned on the word and picked up Ellis, that cad who made Kent appear decent, and I followed them, pondering many things; what was the Erpingham mystery? and chiefly Kent's strange ethics.

* * * * *

Two or three days after that, Gale and Cooper, came into my room. "I say, Toothpick, just how many things can your chum Erpingham do really well?" asked Cooper.

"Don't know—most everything."

"Well, he's a blessed Admirable Crichton, seems to me," said Gale. "Reggie and I have just been in the gym."

"Well—Dick wasn't there, was he?"

"He was—all there. Remarkably so, Reg, eh?"

"Rather," said Cooper. "He had the gloves on against Pickles. Sergeant Instructor Pickles put in all he knew, and it just did."

"Just about," chimed in Gale. "It's a curly right that just did. Your Erpingham has it in all its deadly beauty."

"He isn't as good as Bill Kent, is he?" I asked, wonderingly.

"Is he as good as Bill?" asked Cooper.

"Well," said Gale, reflectively, "I'd say no. But there's mighty little in it. Almost a toss up, I'd say."

"I would not bet threepence either way," said Cooper. "I'd give something to see them have three rounds."

"Well, I'm hanged if I would," said I hastily.

"Too ding-dong for your nerves, Toothpick?" asked Gale.

"Oh, decidedly," I hurried to say. "Too ding-dong altogether. But, praise the saints, there's no chance of that."

Gale and Cooper eyed my anxious face for a moment, and then both burst into hilarious laughter. Cooper recovered first. "'Pon my word, Frank, I think it the likeliest thing in the world."

"Don't see how they can help it," said Gale.

"Whatever do you mean?" asked I, getting up in my anxiety.

"Why, Marston asked him instanter after his show with Pickles—and Pickles backed the master up—to let his name be put down for the trials for Aldershot—Heavies. And his name's down: *Erpingham.*"

"He *must* run into three rounds with Bill. Can't help it. For if Kent isn't the best man, your chum is, Toothpick," said Cooper, as if he were doing logic.

"What I want to know," said Gale, "is this. If Erpingham goes to Aldershot and pulls off the Heavies, should that count one to Harford? That awful right of his, and that serviceable left, are not our produce."

"Residential qualification," said Cooper, blithely.

"I claim the credit of finding him," said Gale. "Footer and gloves. I took him to the gym. I suppose you don't thank me, Frank?"

"Not a bit," said I. "And, if Dick were Jem Mace himself, he couldn't go to Aldershot."

"That's a pity," said Cooper.

"Ah well," said Gale, "I wish I had one or two things that Erpingham sets no store by." The pair went out half amused, half puzzled, at my evident worry.

I saw Dick the same night. "Don't worry, Frank. I'm not going to muck up the Easter grind for fifty Aldershots, even if I were good enough. It is only this. When I got into the gym. and saw the fellows sparring, I had my collar off and I reached out for a pair of gloves myself before I thought what I was doing, as naturally as you go and look at a fellow's book-case. Just think, Frank—I had not had the gloves on for over a year. It was old times come back again. Pickles was doing nothing, and within a minute, just as I was, boots and shirt—stiff shirt, mind, and that cramps a fellow no end—we were in the thick of it. I felt it was good to be alive. Had a glorious ten minutes. I was slow, naturally; but I got through Pickles once or twice and I felt him rock. I should say, Frank," said Dick reflectively, "I can hit twice as hard as last year."

"Don't like the idea of your meeting Bill Kent, Dick."

"Now, I'd like to," said Dick. "Feel, somehow, if Kent's as good as I fancy, three rounds would do us both good. I think I'd respect the fellow more."

"You'll cut time to waste, Dick," said I grumblingly.

"Not a bit. Half hour a day: not one bit more. Feel as sure of myself as can be."

"Marston asked you to come in, didn't he?"

"Said he'd like me to, and how could I refuse a real, decent beak like Marston a simple thing like that?"

"You jolly well didn't try to," said I.

Dick laughed. "Honest truth, Frank, I was delighted when he asked me. Come and see us."

"When are the trials?"

"Friday before the Old Carthusians' Saturday."

"I'll see if I can spare the time from the Arts," said I, solemnly.

"Then I'll see you there all serene."

On that memorable Friday Jim Mordaunt and I got a good perch, for Jim was determined to cut study for the night. We saw round after round: Light, Middle, and Heavies; some bad, some indifferent, some good, and one or two extra specially good. Dick met his introducer, Gale, and rewarded him. He ran up such a sequence of points in the first round that Gale never had a look in afterwards. Then Macpherson, a fellow from Asquith's, with a face like his own Scotch granite, an awkward natural fighter whom Pickles could not polish into Harfordian gloss, came out. Then I saw what Cooper called the "deadly beauty" of Erpingham's right. It brought Macpherson up standing, more than once. Harfordians looked at each other, almost too surprised to cheer, when Marston gave Dick the verdict.

"Bill will have a real handful, Frank," said Jim to me. "And I hit Erpingham in the mouth once," he murmured to himself.

That final for the Heavies is talked of yet at Harford. Bill came out, and Dick slipped his overcoat. He stretched out his hand to Kent with a frank smile. Bill took it coolly and nonchalantly; but a curious, certain joy lit up his face: a grim smile, not tainted with the slightest contempt, hovered over his mouth: you saw Kent was going into play with full knowledge of his own powers, appreciation of his opponent's, and with a savage joy in the encounter. The school broke into deafening applause: applause for the old, wary, cunning Harfordian, the fellow whose pluck

never failed, whose nerves never trembled, and applause for the brilliant newcomer who had lived down, by sheer sporting merit, an evil reputation. Dick had certain advantages over Bill. He was taller, had a longer reach, and was probably heavier; but Bill was trickier and his foot work was better, and, above all, Kent knew where Dick's power lay. When, in the first few leads, Erpingham tried his right, Bill dodged and countered heavily Dick was in the rear at once. Warmed up by that crashing counter, he went into the fray with redoubled vigour, and, despite all Kent's trickiness, he had at least drawn level when the first round was called.

"Nothing in it," whispered Jim "so far."

Round two Dick began to draw ahead: that extra bit of reach, that extra height, were a heavy handicap for Bill. His trickiness saved him from material damage, but Dick was scoring, scoring all the time, and Kent could not get home. A second or two from the end Erpingham's right shot out again. Bill took his chance of being knocked out when he dodged. Erpingham's glove shot into space and Bill's counter sent Dick reeling back. Erpingham rocked where he stood, and it was lucky for him that "time" saved him.

"How are they now?" I asked Jim, anxiously.

"Nothing in it, Frank. That last counter brought Bill level again and has shaken Erpingham above a trifle. It's anybody's game."

Harfordians, for the most part, were still as still; some whispered hurriedly to their neighbours in low tense whispers, all of us stared, I, for my part, with something like awe, upon Kent and Erpingham breathing heavily in their corners. Bill's eternal smile flickered still, a sort of grim joy beamed on his face; and Dick showed up strong and resolute. What made me wonder was that neither Erpingham nor Kent showed the least sign of anger. There must be some sort of fine discipline in boxing that can make a man take fierce blows and not hate the one that deals them.

In profound silence both sprang up at the word. Bill wisely determined to force the fighting, to get into closer touch with his foe, when he could hope better to neutralise Dick's longer reach; and it paid him. With lead, guard, swinging counter, the soft *thud, thud* of

HE ROLLED OVER PRONE.

gloves on flesh, the rapid muffled patter of feet, the quick panting breath, the fight went on. Kent was scoring three to two now.

"Bill's drawing away," whispered Jim, and indeed I could see that for myself.

Little by little in that hurricane round Bill was adding to his points, and he seemed to know it: the knowledge showed in his telling, finer work, which had been ineffective at long range. Dick was going on gamely enough, though, and Kent could not be certain until the call went. But most of the Harfordians had little doubt what Marston's verdict would be.

"Well, I never want to see a finer round," murmured Mordaunt. "Bill has the trick of that straight right."

Had he? The sands of that third round were running out, when Dick, who had rarely feinted so far, feinted with his left. Bill was

drawn. Erpingham's recovery was almost instantaneous, and then that deadly Stonehurst right shot out. Bill, caught off his balance, ducked. Too late. Square on the jaw the drive landed. Kent reeled back, made a desperate effort to recover his footing, and failed. He rolled over prone, one arm doubled under him, the other flung forth beyond his head. He did not move. With slow solemnity he was counted out.

Erpingham had won at the last gasp.

Not a sound was heard from the awe-struck, astonished school. Was Kent hurt? Dick sprang forward and raised him up: he looked dazedly round. In another moment he had recovered. Erpingham stretched out his hand frankly. "I've had all the luck, Kent."

"Haven't enjoyed myself so much for ages," murmured Kent

"I was almost out," I heard Dick say, and together they went into the dressing-room. As they moved away, cheers broke out for victor and vanquished—cheers which rang in my ears for many a day.

As Jim filed out ahead of me I heard a voice say, "They teach 'em how to box at Stonehurst, don't they, Firmin?"

This was Ellis. By the savage leer on his evil face I saw that he, too, knew. *Stonehurst!* If he knew that, he knew the rest.

My mind was made up as I glanced at Ellis. I waited for Dick.

(*To be concluded.*)

A SAFE CROSSING.

My sister wrote saying would I meet
Her boy going home from school
At 12.15 at Cannon Street,
En route for Liverpool.

I met the youngster, fat and fair,
In scanty Etons dress'd,
And, having lots of time to spare
Suggested lunch "up West."

Said I, "The grill-room at the 'Cri.'"
For lunch would pleasant be."
"No thanks," he said, "a small meat-pie
Will do quite well for me."

We went into a luncheon bar
Where men stand up in rows
And bolt their lunch, as though they are
Afraid the place will close.

My nephew seized a plate of ham,
Which disappeared from view;
Three sausage rolls, some leg of lamb,
A hard-boiled egg or two.

And then he gave his mind to fish,
A chicken wing, some steak,
Plum tart, and then expressed a wish
To finish off with cake.

He lifted gently, one by one,
Each cake-protecting shade;
And with resultant cake or bun
Acquaintance quickly made.

For drink he tackled ginger-beer,
Then soda-water plain,
A glass of milk, and then, I fear,
Tried ginger-beer again.

At last he sighed repletion's sigh.
I paid the lengthy bill,
And led the youngster forth to die
Or else be very ill.

When safely in a cab again
I asked him how he felt.
"My boy," said I, "have you no pain,
No qualms beneath the belt?"

My nephew simply murmured: "Rot,
I'm rather off my feed;
A pain? not much! but tell you what,
I shouldn't mind a weed!"

I gave him quite a strong cheroot,
In hopes that I might ween,
And thereby save, this young recruit
From bonds of nicotine.

He smoked it to the very stump,
Remarking, "H'm, not bad.
Here's Euston. Uncle, you're a trump,
What ripping fun we've had!"

The train steamed out. This sinful youth
Just let the window down,
And shouted, "Uncle, wire the truth—
You've seen me safe through town!"

GEORGE ALFRED JAMES.

THE AMERICAN "SANDHURST."

How "U.S." Officers are made.

By J. Stanton.

The following article will enable CAPTAIN readers to contrast the thoroughness of American methods with the much-criticised and recently partially reformed English system.

AN American boy who has gone through—or tried to get through—"West Point" thinks that the training of *our* young Army officers is carried on in a very mild, milk-and-watery manner, and laughs when he hears a fellow complaining of the hardships of his life.

At West Point Institution, where the officers of the United States Army are trained, the discipline is more rigorous than that experienced by any other schoolboy in the world. West Point cadets have to learn to obey in order to become fit to command, and to learn that hard lesson very quickly, too.

Every action of the day moves with martial step to the command of the bugle. The first call is sounded at half-past six, when the shrill notes echo through the silent halls of "barracks." It is "réveillé," and ere its notes have died away three hundred boys tumble out of their iron cots, thrust themselves into shoes, trousers, coat, and cap, and rush downstairs into ranks for the morning roll-call.

As soon as the line is formed, the sergeant of each company steps forward and calls the roll. He does not, as a rule, carry any list, but rattles over the seventy or eighty names as fast as possible, the names being impressed on his memory through constant repetition. In an incredibly short time the boys are back in their rooms, and in the half-hour that elapses between roll-call and breakfast they have to wash, dress, and get their rooms ready for inspection.

The tidying-up process does not take very long, for the rooms, each shared by two boys, are bare of all but the commonest necessaries of life. Each contains two study tables, three wooden chairs, a washing-stand of iron, and two iron cots, separated by a low wood partition. Against the wall are rows of shelves for clothes and books, and a few pegs, but there are no pictures, no knick-knacks, none of the treasures that young fellows are so fond of collecting in their "dens."

The boys occupying the same room take it in turn to serve as Orderly, each acting for a week at a time, and the boy on duty must sweep and dust and care for the room, each being responsible for his own personal belongings. The bed-clothes must be folded at the head of the cot, boots and shoes must be ranged along the wall with precision, and every article of clothing hung on its own particular peg.

When the inspection officer comes along the cadets stand at attention while he notes the condition of the room. If there is a shoe out of line, or a scrap of soiled linen in sight, it means "demerits" for the offender. Personal friendship with the inspection officer for the week will not soften his heart; he is "on honour" to make an accurate report, and if he showed leniency his chum would be the first to cry out against him, for to put a West Pointer on his honour is like putting another fellow on oath. Lying, for instance, is one of the vices from which the institution is entirely free.

After inspection comes breakfast, a hearty meal with plenty of bread and butter, slices of meat, coffee, tea, or milk, and molasses. After breakfast there is half-an-hour for

silent preparation, and then study right on from eight till one, when the sound of the dinner bugle calls the hungry cadets (a cadet who is not always hungry is a natural curiosity) to another substantial meal. They have just five minutes in which to wash before forming in line and marching down to the mess-hall, a long, low room containing thirty tables. Meat, vegetables, pudding, disappear with wonderful rapidity, and half-an-hour after the boys are marching back to barracks. At two, study recommences and lasts till four, when they are dismissed for fifteen minutes. That time has barely elapsed when the roll of a drum calls the boys to the field if fine, or to the armoury if the weather is very inclement. An hour is spent in drill of various sorts. The "Cruities" go through tortures learning goose-step and the words of command; the elders do Company Drill and are instructed in the manual of arms. Any boy is liable to be called out of the ranks and ordered to drill his fellows, or to explain how they should form in order to make a line long enough to reach a certain point, and other terrible problems contained in drill books are expounded.

Drill ends at half-past five, unless it is parade day. In that case the cadets turn out in parade order.

After drill the cadets get the first—and only—hour in the day that they can call their own, and very thoroughly they enjoy it. At supper they are allowed to talk.

Half-an-hour after supper comes the "call to quarters," which means that every one must return to his room and study his lessons for the morrow. To play truant is almost impossible, as sentries are posted, who make rounds of inspection, and an absence would be detected at once. At a quarter-past nine "tattoo" warns the boys to prepare for bed, and fifteen minutes later the slow roll of "taps" heralds the extinction of lights and silence.

Midnight suppers, bolster fights, etc., are almost unknown in this school; the boys work too hard to care to turn night into day, and expulsion is so much dreaded.

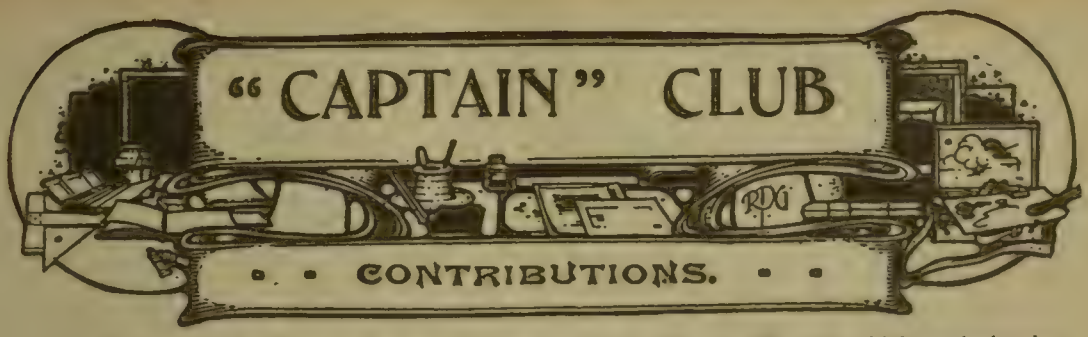
In summer three months are spent under canvas, and the hours of study lessen considerably; physical drill and practical work in scouting, cooking, attending to horses, etc., take the place of Euclid, algebra, and geometry.

The school is practically officered by the boys themselves, there being different ranks corresponding to our Army system of lance-corporals, corporals, sergeants, and sergeant-majors. One of the features of West Point life which would seem strange to the English boy is the democratic principle on which it is conducted. Each cadet receives from the Government £100 a year. Out of this he pays for clothing and rations, which he obtains from the commissary department. He is not allowed to receive any money from outside sources, and the detection of a breach of this rule would be followed by instantaneous expulsion. In these circumstances there can be no difference in dress or expenditure, and this spirit of equality is accepted by all the men.

West Point is no place for a young man who has not a natural aptitude for a military career. To him, the stern requirements of the studies, the discipline, which never relaxes, become unbearable. He picks up a pile of "demerits," and very soon gets sent back home, no matter how high he stood in the list of passes. Nearly half of those who enter the academy fail for some reason or other to complete the course.

"Demerits" are given for the most trifling offences, such as "gazing about in the ranks," having an "odour of cigarettes in his room," or appearing "on parade with soiled gloves." A rigorous medical examination has to be passed every few months, and all the men who are in the least unfit are weeded out.

Thus the American Army is magnificently officered, and when the rank and file reach the same pitch of perfection the States will have an army which will be beaten by none.



THIS part of the Magazine is set aside for Members of the CAPTAIN Club, to which anybody who is a regular purchaser of THE CAPTAIN may belong. Contributions should be kept quite short. Drawings should be executed on stiff board in Indian ink. CAPTAIN Club contributions are occasionally used in other parts of the Magazine.

BOOKS by CAPTAIN authors are awarded to all the contributors to this month's "CAPTAIN Club" pages. Each prize-winner is requested to select a book.

"How to Skate."

IN the January number, L. W. D. offers a few simple hints to those desirous of learning to skate. If "those desirous of learning to skate" follow these "few simple hints," they *will* learn to skate—in a way.

First of all, you are advised to fasten your skates on in a room where there is no floor covering, and walk about until you can balance yourself safely on the blades without bending the ankle. This is all very well, but it is not practice on ice, and tends rather to injure the skates, especially if they are hollow ground.

Next, it is doubtful whether a kitchen chair is a wonderful help. L. W. D. is apparently unaware of the fact that the motion required for pushing a kitchen chair, or anything else, while skating, is different from that required for skating proper. While pushing a kitchen chair on ice, the feet are turned out at a greater angle than while skating in the ordinary way. This enables the skater to "cut" the ice better than is otherwise necessary. While skating in the usual way, most of the pressure is from the shoulders, which are forced forward with every stroke; whereas, while pushing anything, the pressure is from the lower limbs. The novice who makes his first appearance on the ice attached to a chair, finds, when he decides to trust himself to his own legs, that he has many things to learn and many things to unlearn.

Then as to falling. The beginner who starts to think of falling, and continues to think of falling, will never learn to skate. A forward fall will hurt just as much as a backward fall—if you land on the right place; and a backward fall may be just as harmless as a forward fall—also if you land on the right place.

The best way to learn to skate is to fasten on your skates, get on to ice as soon as possible

APROPOS OF THE STORY "BARHAM'S CHIMNEY," WHICH APPEARS IN THIS NUMBER, THE ABOVE PHOTOGRAPH OF A CHIMNEY BEING "FALLED," AT HOLBECK, LEEDS, IS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST.

Photo. G. A. Wade.

JONES MINOR, WHO HAS BEEN PICKED TO PLAY GOAL FOR HIS HOUSE SOCCER TEAM, RETIRES TO REST IN GREAT EXCITEMENT AND MIXES THINGS UP A BIT IN HIS DREAMS.

Drawn by Harry Rawnsley.

and then simply knock about. Ask your friends to push you along as much as you like—or rather, as much as they like, and get as many "tips" as you can from experienced skaters. And above all, when falling, on no account attempt to recover your balance, but just let yourself go.

DEREK.

[Very sensible.—O.F.]

Canada's Lacrosse Champions.

LACROSSE at its best will be seen in England in the spring. The "Capitals" (Ottawa), having won the Minto Cup, are to display their powers in the Old Country.

The Capitals had been promised a trip to Europe if they succeeded in bringing the Minto Cup to the capital, and, in fulfilment of its promise, the management has arranged for the team to sail for England in March.

CAPTAIN readers will thus have a splendid chance of seeing the Canadian national game at its best, for the Capitals are undoubtedly the strongest team in the Dominion. Hutton, the goal-keeper, is alone worth seeing, as he is considered the finest net-guardian in Canada. English players would do well to observe the cool, steady relieving of the Capital defence, the tireless work of the field, and the quick, sure passing and lightning-like shooting of the home.

It is to be hoped that the Capitals' tour will give a decided impetus to Lacrosse in Great Britain.

HAROLD S. PATTON (Toronto).

Street-Names in London.

HOW many people give a thought to the derivations of the street-names of the greatest city in the world? Perhaps one in a thousand of its great population; and yet the subject is well worth consideration. Cripplegate, Moorgate, Bishopsgate, and Aldgate, all mark the sites of the old civic portals, while the Barbican reminds us of the position of an old tower on the city wall.

In old London, the followers of a particular trade were wont to congregate in certain localities, and these are commemorated in such names as Change Alley, Shoe Lane, Goldsmith's Row, and Bread Street.

When houses were not numbered as they are now, tradesmen used to hang signs outside their windows, indicating the class of goods they dealt in. Thus, the tool merchant who dwelt next to St. Mary's Church, hung an axe over the door of his shop. As there were many St. Mary's Churches in London, this particular one was called "St. Mary's at the Sign of the Axe," which we now know as St. Mary Axe. Busy city men, however, are not contented with even this abbreviation, and designate the locality "Simmery Axe!"

Marylebone gets its name from Mary's Burn, a stream which flowed through it, and not from the Virgin, "St. Marie la Bonne," as some assert. Houndsditch is named after a

BOVEY TRACEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOOTBALL XI.

stream at which the dogs from the royal kennels, then close by, were brought to drink. Once upon a time nuns were known as "Minchuns," and hence we have Mincing Lane, where the convents once stood. Many of the curious names of London streets are derived from similarly interesting sources. YELVERTON.

[I should be glad to receive further essays of this kind.—O.F.]

A Football Record.

BOVEY TRACEY Grammar School football eleven, a photograph of which we reproduce on the opposite page, in its first three matches this season placed the following record to its credit:

v. Newton Grammar School, 13 goals to 0.
v. Ashburton Grammar School, 7 goals to 1.
v. Totnes Grammar School, 25 goals to 0.

H. T., who sends the photograph, thinks this is a record.

Esperanto: a Protest.

AS a strong opponent of the principle of an international language, I feel myself bound to reply to one of E. J. Patterson's statements in his article on "Esperanto" in the December number.

IRSTEAD CHURCH, OF WHICH WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM WAS RECTOR IN 1347.
Drawn by W. H. Campbell.

AN INSTANCE OF UNCONSCIOUS HUMOUR.
As the bridge, a corner of which is shown above, was being mis-used as a bill-posting station, the usua prohibitive notice was ordered to be painted on the pillars.
Photo. by Alex Scott, Jnr.

He says, "The aim of the Esperantists is to make Esperanto a common *second* language for all nations, not to displace existing languages." I maintain that this is not the case. If Esperanto is to become an international language it must be taught in our schools, and, what is even more, it must be talked in our streets, or it will be of no more use than French is to most of the schoolboys who learn it. If it is to be talked in our streets and our homes it *must* "displace existing languages." A language spoken in all the world must displace all those tongues which are only spoken in parts of it.

Looking, then, at Esperanto as a language made for the definite purpose of overthrowing all existing languages (for every Esperantist wants it to be universally used), let us see what it means to men of all countries, and especially to us Englishmen.

The greatest mark of a common nationality is a common language, and this is one of the

FARMER TURMUTOP: "Lawks! But I'll 'ave to keep me eyes open, I don' know what M'ria 'ud say if I lost me new watch."

Drawn by L. J. Wakefield.

great reasons why Australia and Canada are so bound to each other and to the Mother Country for a Canadian; or an Australian, can call himself an Englishman. On this point let me quote the great Imperialist, Mr. Strachey, who calls the possession of a common language "the great fact that already binds us all together and will continue to bind us still more strongly."

Is the language which our forefathers have gradually formed to be supplanted by a new one with nothing to recommend it but a simple system of grammar? Must we renounce the language of Shakespeare and Milton, of Dickens and Thackeray, in order that, if we should ever happen to travel, we may converse more easily with foreigners? France must give up the language of Voltaire, Italy of Dante, and Germany of Goethe, in order to speak a language whose chief object is to overthrow those tongues!

No patriotic Englishman will agree to substitute Esperanto for English; no true Briton will check English to further Esperanto; no Imperialist will untie one of the greatest cords that bind together our great Empire in every quarter of the globe, in order to use the same language as the countries which are our bitter rivals in commerce, and which, in some cases, have little cause to love us.

PERCY HARTILL.

Irish Schools.

LIFE in the majority of Irish public schools is somewhat different from that in similar institutions in England. Practically every one here does "stinks and jabber," while the Greek scholars are comparatively few, though most boys do Latin. Science, indeed, is one of the most important parts of an Irish schoolboy's education. Reporting to the Head, too, is not the serious affair it is at English schools. Our undermasters rarely cane, and "lines" are not much in vogue, consequently many offences which in England are dealt with by the undermasters are here referred to the Head. Bounds, also, are more confined; indeed, they are generally comprised in the school grounds. Prefects in most Irish schools have little power; often, their office is a nominal one. Perhaps, however, the most striking difference is in the absence of the "fagging" system. This is nothing like so prevalent here as in England, and in some schools is non-existent. Another difference is in the size of our schools. Here, a roll of one hundred day-boys and an equal number of boarders, is considered fairly large—in fact, I don't think half a dozen schools exceed this.

Our slang, too, is different. We never use the word "crib," but say "cog." "Mill" means not merely to fight, but to lick your opponent. A fellow says he has got "D.T." when he is put down for detention. A sneak is known as a "twot" or a "skitter." We don't call a fellow a "slacker;" our corresponding word is a "stook."

DISCIPULUS HIBERNICUS.

"Crusoe's Island Destroyed."

THE above heading in a daily paper about six months ago must have caused quite a pang in the heart of many a schoolboy. No doubt the terrible earthquake in Chile will live long in the memory of not a few of our younger generation, and perhaps some

AFTER THE FRAY.
Drawn by Dyke White.

of the older ones, because it destroyed the old home of Robinson Crusoe.

Juan Fernandez, as it was called, was thirteen miles long by four broad, and had been leased successively to a German engineer and a Swiss, both of whom started a small agricultural colony there. Previous to that date the island had been used as a penal settlement by the Chilian Government. It is to Alexander Selkirk that the island owes its fame, and his memory has been preserved there by a tablet erected in 1868 by the officers of H.M.S. *Topaze*, which bore the following inscription :

"In memory of Alexander Selkirk, mariner, a native of Largo, in the County of Fife, Scotland, who was on this island in complete solitude for four years and four months. He was landed from the *Cinque Porte* galley, 96 tons, 16 guns, 1704, A.D., and was taken off in the *Duke*, privateer, February 12, 1709. He died lieutenant of the *Weymouth*, 1723, A.D., aged forty-seven years."

Alexander Selkirk, the original of Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe," was put ashore from the *Cinque Porte* galley in 1704. It appears that he had an irreconcilable difference with the commander, and preferred being marooned on this lonely island to sailing in a leaky ship under an officer whom he disliked.

He took with him a sea-chest, his wearing clothes and bedding, a fire-lock, a pound of gunpowder, a large quantity of bullets, a flint and steel, a few pounds of tobacco, a hatchet, a knife, a kettle, a Bible and other books of devotion, together with treatises on navigation, and his mathematical instruments. In addition he had food for two meals.

His feelings were joyful enough when he first stepped upon the island and exulted in his freedom from the restraint of the ship and the rule of an officer who had ill-used him. When, however, his comrades were pulling back to the ship, he realised how lonely was the life he had chosen.

He grew dejected and melancholy, and was frightened at the noises made by the sea-lions and other monsters of the deep. For the first eighteen months he continued in this frame of mind, but by reading his Bible, and turning his thoughts to the study of navigation, he became reconciled to his surroundings. He took delight in everything and by ornamentation converted his hut, which he had built beside a little wood, into a delightful bower.

The island abounded in wild goats, cats, and rats, and upon the sea-shore were numerous

THE OLD FAG AT HIS DESK IN 1920.
Drawn by F. J. Baron.

turtles. The rats were at first a great nuisance, but by taming some of the young kittens he was able to rid himself of the pests and gained pleasant companions. As a precaution against want in time of sickness he lamed some of the kids when young, so that they might recover their health but never be capable of speed.

When his clothes were worn out he made some out of the skins of goats dried and tacked together. In this dress he was able to pass unhurt through bushes and brambles.

He grew to like this kind of life so much that, when the ship came which was to take him off, he viewed with indifference the prospect of returning to civilisation.

Upon his return to England he was an object of much curiosity. Steele says : "When I first saw him, I thought if I had not been let into his character and story, I could have discerned that he had been much separated from company, from his aspect and gestures ; there was a strong but cheerful seriousness in his looks, and a certain disregard to the ordinary things about him, as if he had been sunk in thought. . . . The man frequently bewailed his return to the world, which could not, he said, with all its enjoyments, restore him to the tranquillity of his solitude. Though I had frequently conversed with him, after a few months' absence he met me in the street, and though he spoke to me, I could not recollect that I had seen him ; familiar discourse in this town had taken off the loneliness of his aspect and quite altered the air of his face."

ERNEST PINNOCK.

COMPETITIONS FOR FEBRUARY.

The attention of Competitors is drawn to the fact that the address of THE CAPTAIN Office is now *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.*

Last day for sending in, February 18. (Foreign and Colonial Readers, April 18.)

NOTICE.—At the top of the first page the following particulars must be clearly written, thus:

Competition No. ——, Class ——, Name ——
Address ——, Age ——.

Letters to the Editor should not be sent with competitions.

We trust to your honour to send in unaided work.

Pages should be connected with paper-fasteners; not pins.

Write only on one side of the paper.

COUPONS.—In order to ensure that those who compete for our prizes are actual purchasers of the magazine, we require all competitors to affix to their competitions the coupons which will be found on an advertisement page. A coupon is provided for each competition. Please use paste, gum, or paper-fasteners for attaching these coupons to the paper.

You may send as many attempts for each competition as you like, but each attempt must be forwarded in a separately stamped envelope and bear a coupon.

HONOURABLE MENTIONS.—Counting from the results published in the January number, competitors may apply for a certificate of merit when they have been honourably mentioned twelve times.

Address envelopes as follows: Competition No. ——, Class ——, THE CAPTAIN, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.

All competitions should reach us by February 18.

The Results will be published in April.

AGE RULE: A Competitor may enter for (say) an age limit 21 competition, so long as he has not actually turned 22. The same rule applies to the other age limits.

In every case the decision of the Editor is final, and he cannot enter into correspondence with unsuccessful competitors.

No. 1.—***"Cities of the World."***—On one of our advertisement pages you will find twelve pictures. Each picture is intended to represent the name of a city in some part of the world. Write the name under each picture, fill in your name, age, class, and address, tear out the page, and post to us. Prizes: Three Boxes of Water Colours, manufactured by Messrs. G. Rowney and Co. (See Prizes page.)

Class	I.	Age limit:	Twenty-one.
Class	II.	Age limit:	Sixteen.
Class	III.	Age limit:	Twelve.

No. 2.—***"My Stamp Collection."***—Many valuable stamp collections have been built up from very modest beginnings. Write an essay, not exceeding 400 words, telling us how you formed your stamp collection. The prize will be a No. 2 "Cistafile" Outfit, value £3 3*s.*, manufactured by Messrs. Lawn and Barlow. (See Prizes page.)

One Age limit. Twenty-one.

No. 3.—***"Dog Stories."***—In the "Editorial" we publish a couple of stories relating to the remarkable instinct possessed by dogs. To the senders of the two best anecdotes of a similar character we will award a "Midg." Camera, manufactured by Messrs. W. Butcher and Sons. (See Prizes page.)

Class	I.	Age limit:	Twenty-five.
Class	II.	Age limit:	Sixteen.

No. 4.—***"Photographic Competition."***—Send a print from your best negative. Photographs must be original, *i.e.*, not copied from the work of others. Neatness in mounting will be taken into consideration. Prizes: Three "Sunny Memories" Albums, supplied by Messrs. A. W. Gamage, Ltd.

Class	I.	Age limit:	Twenty-one.
Class	II.	Age limit:	Sixteen.

No. 5.—***"Drawing Competition."***—Design a Coat of Arms for the Old Fag. Prizes: Drawing Materials to the value of Half a Guinea, supplied by Messrs. Müller and Co.

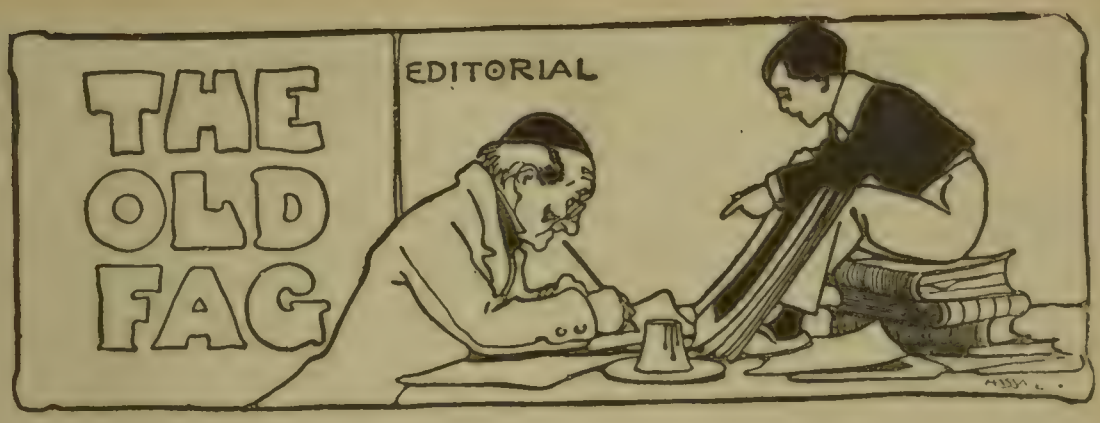
Class	I.	Age limit:	Twenty-five.
Class	II.	Age limit:	Twenty-one.

No. 6.—***"Quaint Remarks about Sport."***—The Old Fag, in his chat, refers to the quaintly innocent remarks girls often make about games. We want you to send us a brief paragraph relating a curious remark of this sort. For the three best anecdotes we shall award three autographed copies of "Love Among the Chickens," by P. G. Wodehouse, price 6*s.*

Class	I.	No age limit.	
Class	II.	Age limit:	Twenty-one.
Class	III.	Age limit:	Sixteen.

FOREIGN and COLONIAL READERS are invited to compete. In their case the time limit is extended to ***April*** 18, Australian readers being allowed ten days longer. By "Foreign and Colonial" we refer to readers living ***outside*** Europe. There will be ***no age limit.*** One prize of 5*s.* will be awarded to the sender of the best entry in each Competition. Envelopes should be marked: "Foreign and Colonial February Competitions."

Coupons must not be sent loose.



SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, LONDON.

"An Incident at a Bull-fight."—To our English ideas bull-fighting is a barbarous affair, but, as the writer of the article appearing in this number remarks, with the Spaniard the sport is "bred in the bone." It is, therefore, not surprising that he sees no harm in it. But the popular passion for this brutal game—beside which Rugby football is a nursery amusement—may abate in time. The Dowager Queen dislikes bull-fighting; the young Queen Victoria must view it with abhorrence. Again, King Alphonso cannot but imbibe certain English notions of "sport" during his visits to this country, not to speak of his constant association with a highly bred Englishwoman. So, as time rolls on, it is not an impossibility that honest and bloodless pastimes like cricket and football may supplant the bull-fight, and that the present flourishing farms for the rearing of bulls for the tourney may exist but to supply the needs of our good friends Bovril and Oxo!

The Scene depicted on our cover is from the clever brush of Mr. Alfred Pearse, the well-known artist. In explanation thereof, "A. P." writes: "During the present King of Spain's enthronement festivities in Madrid, I attended the bull-fight in which six of the most famous Espadas, or Matadors, including Machiquito and Guerrerito, took part. The latter, as shown on the cover, was tossed several feet into the air by the bull just as he was about to give it the *coup de grâce*, but, fortunately, was not seriously injured. I do not think Englishmen would wish to witness a bull-fight twice. I was thankful to find that the thrust of the bull's horns had a numbing effect upon its victims, for horses which were trembling with fright before being gored, afterwards faced the bull fearlessly over and over again. The exciting part of the spectacle was the cool daring of the Bandarilleros and the Matadors in enticing and evading the terrible rushes of the bull, magnificent in its fury. To me the most sad part of the scene was the death of the animal that had pluckily faced all kinds of torment and badgering, sometimes even tossing horse and rider into the air in its rage; sad, because upon receiving the fatal thrust it suddenly threw up its head and bellowed piteously; then, bewildered, slowly turned round and round, as the blood poured from its mouth and wounds, until, with a sobbing moan, it sank to the ground. . . . Guerrerito, the subject of the picture, recently acted as 'Best Man' to Machiquito at the latter celebrity's marriage to the beautiful daughter of an Englishman residing in Spain."

"How our Fish is Caught"—and Salted.—We have to be very careful on THE CAPTAIN. Do we make a slip, we are immediately pulled up. Myriads of eyes watch us. Experts of all kinds are constantly prepared to pounce upon and correct us. Take, now, the subject of fish. I do not know much about fish. Breakfasts off the tasty bloater and the appetising kipper represent my investigations in that direction. I may say, indeed, that I know nothing about fish, absolutely nothing, except that they cost money. So, when Mr. A. E. Johnson, that adventurous six-foot contributor of ours, expounded on the subject of "How our Fish is Caught" in a recent number, how could I

be expected to check his statements? I did not try. I took all he said as the truth, and among other things he said was that cod caught by trawlers was invariably salted. I did not stop to question this statement. It seemed reasonable enough. But an eye more expert than mine was on Mr. Johnson, and this was the eye of Mr. W. J. Sinderson, a prominent Grimsby fish-merchant. Mr. Sinderson, without losing a moment, wrote and declared that it was only the cheaper quality of cod that was salted. Soon after that, he sent me quite a lengthy description of the salting of fish. He seemed determined that I should know all about it. Well, I forwarded Mr. Sinderson's letter to Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Johnson replied as follows: "I am loth to question the accuracy of a critic who writes from Grimsby, and presumably has the authority of a 'man on the spot.' But his information does not tally with that given me during a voyage in the course of which the photographs under discussion were taken. The steam-trawler in which I had the privilege to be a passenger was one of the largest out of 'GY,' and it is a fact that every bit of cod she took during this particular voyage—including fish from Portland, on the south coast, and Faxe Bay on the west—was salted and landed at Kirkwall on the way home. I was informed by the skipper, himself one of the best-known and most experienced fishermen sailing from Grimsby, that it is the custom with practically all the large and long-voyaging trawlers thus to treat the cod taken in this manner: the supply of fresh cod being maintained by the 'cod-men,' which bring their fish actually alive to market, in the well with which such vessels are specially equipped. It is conceivable, of course, that I misapprehended the skipper's information. But I do not think so."

So there you are! I have quoted this case of alleged inaccuracy to show how careful we have to be. Imagine my aged eye wandering painfully up and down a hundred pages of type every month, looking out for errors! You may say—"But some of the pages are pictures." That doesn't matter. Our pictures are frequently treated to most scathing criticisms—especially the sea story ones. No, gentlemen, it's not all buns and milk being editor of THE CAPTAIN.

"A Girl of Dreams."—I have been reading this girls' book lately, and wish to recommend it to my girl-readers. It is well done throughout, and quite novel in subject. Miss Lily Watson, the author, is evidently a practised hand, and writes with such taste, refinement and common sense that her work deserves to make its way. Her great fault is that she stretches the long arm of coincidence too far, and so at times fails to convince us. But, though "A Girl of Dreams" has palpable defects, it is undeniably interesting. I was obliged to finish it, and I am not the most easily satisfied old man in the world. The book costs five shillings, and is published by Mr. Andrew Melrose, Pilgrim Street, E.C.

Talking about Girls, it is curious what vague ideas some of them have concerning sport. It is, of course, quite true that numbers of the fair sex are almost as well up in games as boys are; still, there are others. You may know the "Overheard at Lord's" joke about the society girl who, attending an Oxford *v.* Cambridge match, turned to her companion and remarked, "What a good bowler that is! He hits the bat every time."

Being interested in all sorts of football, it fell out that on Saturday, January 5, I hied me to Stamford Bridge to see Chelsea play Blackpool. I was accompanied by a blue-eyed, golden-haired maid of sixteen who had expressed a desire to witness a football match. She was quite surprised by the sea of faces that uprose before her on the mud-bank opposite as we climbed to our places in the stand. She had never seen such a crowd before. She took a keen interest in the game, and was much concerned when Scott, the Blackpool left back, was injured and the game stopped for some minutes while the trainer attended to him. Scott was in the wars that afternoon, for in the second half he was injured again, and once more the game was stopped while he received "first aid." After the second injury the blue-eyed maid turned to me, and in absolute seriousness remarked, "I suppose that they will, in time, *kill* him?"

"Dog Stories."—The following story of the remarkable instinct possessed by a dog was going about in the papers not long ago. It appears that the Rector of Claypole, South Lincolnshire, recently died there, and when his family left the parish, a collie dog, which had been in their possession

for some years, was taken to Evesham, in Worcestershire. The animal was conveyed by train and tied up on its arrival. In the night, however, it managed to break loose, and nothing more was heard of it for three weeks afterwards, when it arrived at Claypole, having travelled about a hundred miles, as the crow flies, to reach its old home.

Here is another story which I recently had from the lips of a friend: A gentleman owning a very intelligent mongrel has a large house in St. John's Wood with a billiard room at the back. The house is semi-detached, the adjoining one being built on the same plan, and also possessing a billiard-room. One night the dog showed great uneasiness, and his master, his suspicions aroused, searched the house. In the billiard-room the dog was particularly uneasy, snuffling round in a most restless manner. However, his master was unable to find anybody in the house, and finally went off to bed imagining that the dog must have an attack of the fidgets. The following day he learned that the house next door had been burgled, and from what he was told afterwards he surmised that at the very time he was searching his own billiard-room, the burglar was rifling *the billiard-room of the next house*. This is, I think, a very remarkable instance of canine sagacity.

"Fire Horses."—A correspondent recently asked us the question, "Can the horses attached to a fire-engine smell fire at a distance, and, like a dog, find the place?" We wrote to Captain de Courcy Hamilton, the Chief Officer of the London Fire Brigade, who has been good enough to reply as follows: "The comparison you quote is hardly a correct one, as it is assumed that a dog would find a fire, which I am not prepared to admit is the case. Both the dog and the horse can smell fire at a distance, but it must be remembered that the smell of fire extends over a considerable area, and is not like a trail which is followed by a dog when in pursuit of game or hunting. In my opinion, a dog would only take to finding fires if trained to do so, and horses might be similarly trained. I have, however, never heard of this being attempted. Dogs have only been used in connection with fires for taking back messages. Both dogs and horses thoroughly realise the danger of fire, and I know of a dog that has aroused its master from sleep when the house has been on fire, and no one else aware of the fact. The dog appears to me to be the more sagacious animal of the two; and, again, is more often allowed to be loose and to rely upon its own initiative. If a horse smelt a fire, it would not, I think, go in that direction without being driven; neither would a dog, unless trained to do so."

Aurora Borealis.—(The Stormful.)—Mr. Andrew Henry Lowe, whose "Stories of Stowaways" are appearing in our pages, has had stirring experiences during his period of sailing as a steamship purser, and he passed through one recently which, although not so thrilling as some he has encountered, was not without interest and a spice of the hazardous. Towards the end of October, when steaming up the Gulf of St. Lawrence, near the bleak coast of Labrador, there was witnessed from his vessel the most magnificent display of the Aurora Borealis ever seen by those of the officers and crew on watch at the time. Although it was late at night and bitterly cold, the passengers crowded on deck to catch a glimpse of the beautiful, ever-shifting spectacle, which was quite new to most of them in its brilliant splendour, and far transcended in panoramic grandeur the comparatively feeble glimmerings of what are known in this country as the Northern Lights. From the low-toned, eager exclamations of astonishment and delight uttered by those present, it was evident that they felt the awe-inspiring influence of the extraordinary phenomenon, "What is the cause of it?" was freely asked. "There is a difference of opinion amongst scientists as to the cause," came the answer, "but none amongst seafarers as to what it portends—stormy weather, and we are likely to catch it for this." The prediction came true. Ten days later, on her homeward voyage, the steamer encountered the worst weather experienced in the Gulf for twenty-three years. Strong north-east gales and heavy head seas rendered progress slow and laboured. Out on the ocean, similar conditions prevailed, until the supply of coal was so reduced through the persistent retarding of the ship, that, for several days, cargo had to be used for fuel, and every available member of the crew was employed in sawing deals and sending up grain from the holds to feed the big furnaces. Happily, there was an abundance of combustible freightage on board, and although behind

time the steamer reached her port in safety and without damage or mishap of any kind. Assured that there was plenty of coal-substitute at hand, the passengers exhibited no panic, and Mr. Lowe occupied the leisure granted by the delay, in writing, from a past experience, the "Stowaway" story which appears in the present number.

The Old Fag's Money-box.—Subscriptions for this did not come in with the rapidity that they did last year, and I think the reason is that the Dinner Fund idea of supplying Christmas meals for poor children "touched up" our readers to a greater extent than the idea of a fund to be administered by myself during the year. Then again, the fund had not the advantage of novelty, as was the case last year. However, a very nice sum has come to hand, and with its help I shall be able to give assistance in quite a number of necessitous cases. The following is a list of sums received, and I can assure those who have been generous enough to subscribe that the money will be administered with the greatest care.

	£	s.	d.
The Old Fag	1	1	0
Collected by W. R. Button		12	6
"Nemo"		10	6
Nancy		10	0
Collected by A. J. Lock		6	0
Collected by "A Friend from Ireland"		5	0
Collected by Arthur C. Junkison		5	0
Collected by G. Nicholson		2	6
The following sent Five Shillings each: C. R. D., "Rex.," W. R. C., F. W. B., "Bogs and Heather," "Potter"	1	10	0
The following sent Half a Crown each: Sydney B. Wood, R. Murray Robertson, Andrew Whitehill Frances Tucker, A. Cooper, C. P. Tanner and Family, D. Chesney, R. van Eeghen, "Bob," "Bask"	1	5	0
The following sent Two Shillings each: Cecil G. Ruck, Z., H. A. C., M. B., J. B. Greaves, "Yenton," Cyril Cole Estelle Payne J. Webster Winifred D. Ereaut, "A Potter's Vessel"	1	2	0
The following sent One and Sixpence each: M. and K. Rhodes, Elsie Rowe		3	0
The following sent One Shilling each: F. W. Perks, "Boltonian," H. Bunyan, A. D. Robertson, F. L. Bowes, Norman Perry, "Romfordian," "Jim," "Irons" E. Stowell, D. E. Tyler, L. A. Pavey, J. L. Boys, "Ludensian" F. R. Roberts-Burford, W. H. Mellor, L. Tippen, Ursula Hodgson, Clifford J. Offer, A. J. J., T. Bones, Jnr., M. H., H. W. Burrows, B. W. Prosser, H. S. Burnham S. B. Harris, "Prizewinner," D. K. Vaughvanley, "A Captain" Outdoor Girl" "Taffy," Dorothy and Elaine R., A. V. Porter, X. Y. Z. E. C. Gifford, G. Davis, "Conceited," John F. Thompson, J. W. Morton, R. J. Drury, C. H. G.	2	0	0
The following sent Sixpence each: H. S. Thirkell, D. Benson, D. J. Jones, E. J. Patterson, "Sheffield," Marjorie H. White, Guy Steer, "A Poor Artist." "Marsburg." C. E. F. Osborne, Js. Td. Ss., C. M. Mason, G. A. Gascoigne, Alan L. Snow, Valerie Paul.		7	6
Total	£10	0	0

The Lonely Cottager's Recreation.

THE times have changed indeed, sir, as you're saying.
This place was once as quiet as could be—
My little roadside cottage never entered
By motorist to break sad news to me.

Just come outside the gate, sir, and I'll show you
The spot where dear old Carlo breathed his last.
There never was a better dog than Carlo
Until a motor touched him as it passed.

My dog's life, sir, was diff'rent from my cat's one,
And diff'rent was the way they passed away;
Yes, Carlo gave a yelp as it went o'er him,
But that cat's shriek is with me to this day.

I always *have* kept hens, sir, in the shed there:
I used to have two score of 'em, or more;
They're dwindling down in number very quickly—
How many are there now? Oh, three or four.

This road, sir, is a scene of great destruction
Which serves to brighten up an old man's life.
I always *have* been partial to excitement—
And here I have it served up hot and rife.

Of course it's sad, the cat and dog a-dyin'—
The eggs I used to sell meant money, too;
But I *love* to see the motor-cars a-flyin'—
And so, if you lived here alone, *would you!*

HERBERT WAUGH.

How to get Stories accepted.—Not long ago I was complaining about the careless way in which would-be contributors to THE CAPTAIN submit their stories for my inspection. Very few editors have to do as much correction as I have done on the tales which have appeared in this magazine. I endeavoured to impress on literary aspirants that one cannot spend too much time polishing up one's work. Read the stories of Sir A. Conan Doyle and Mr. W. W. Jacobs, and you will notice how smoothly they present themselves to the eye. You may think that

the delightful little gems that emanate from Mr. Jacobs' workshop are dashed off in an evening, but such is not the case. They are the result of much labour, much pruning, much thought. If only CAPTAIN writers would take a leaf out of Mr. Jacobs' book and emulate his workmanlike methods, my task of editing would be a much lighter one. My remarks on this subject have at any rate borne fruit in one case that I can quote. Writing from Oomaru, Otago, New Zealand, Mr. J. Anderson Brown tells me that he read my suggestions as to how stories should be written, and can fully endorse all the advice then given. "My own experience," he says, "is briefly this. My home is on a lonely sheep station, out in the wilds of New Zealand, and I find it very hard to fill in the long winter evenings. So one evening I sat down to write a story of adventure on the cattle grounds. It was the first I had ever attempted, and it was, as you say in your article, banged off at high pressure until two in the morning, when it was pushed into an envelope in its raw state. Blots, smudges, and wrongly spelt words were the prevailing order, and as for stops, commas, &c.—well, it was a hard job to find any at all. The result was returned with thanks. On receiving the rejected contribution, I raved like a madman. But, after re-reading it, I had to admit to myself, the author, that it was slightly confusing in its real meaning, so I burnt it and commenced another one. Over the second I spent more time, working three hours every night for a week in correcting and altering sentences. At last I finished and posted it. Then I waited anxiously for the result, which came as a rude shock. 'No room for it at present'—which was only a polite way of saying they did not want it. I did not despair, and so started another. This I rewrote four times, and, after numerous changes and corrections, I had just a faint hope of its being accepted. Neither did I misjudge, for it was accepted, and I became the richer by ten shillings. Since then, I have written more, and I find that the only contributions that I get accepted are those I spend time over in correcting and perusing over and over again before finally posting to an editor. Another thing that helps a contribution a lot is a clearly and cleanly typed page, with a margin for editorial corrections."—Need I say that I heartily congratulate Mr. Brown on his thoroughly well-earned success!

NO. 12, BURLEIGH STREET. THE HOME OF "THE CAPTAIN" FOR OVER EIGHT YEARS.

Our new quarters are situated on the first floor of Messrs. Newnes' main building, Southampton Street, Strand.

Farewell to No. 12.

DOGGEREL ODE BY THE HOUND OF THE BASKETVILLES.

DEAR corner house, I leave thee with regret—
Never such lunches elsewhere have I ate!
Thy dear drab face I ne'er shall see again,
Except as I pass from and to the train.
I'm sorry we have parted. Our new place
Is all very well, but I *loved* your old face.
We've got a lift now (we have; it's not my joke!)
And fine rooms, and burn coal instead of coke.
This is high life, old Burleigh—you would larf
To see me going up in the lift—not 'arf!
All the most celebrated authors of the day
Come in and out quite casual, here over the way!
We've got a Turkey carpet, and the Old Feller
Don't now have to poke the fire with his umbrella.
Smart business-like gents come in and out—
Quite putting the Old Feller and me about!
It's all hurry and worry now; we're near the stars—
I.E.—directors in fur coats, smoking shilling cigars!
Never mind! As the Old 'Un says, too much quiet
Isn't good. Man and dog want change of diet.
We're in the main building now, 'mid rush and roar—
Good-bye, dear Burleigh Street! Old man, your paw.

BASK.

CHARACTER DELINEATIONS BY OUR GRAPHOLOGICAL EXPERT

E. R.—You possess very warm powers of affection, with some capacity for occasional flirtation. You might idealise too much, and suffer disappointment in consequence. Jealousy is very possible to you, and you would do a great deal to be liked. You should be clever and musical, with artistic capacity and ability for blending colours well, and arranging rooms gracefully; might design and paint, and probably do art needlework well. Your temper is passionate, and your nature intense, with keen capacity for enjoyment and much depression at times. Warm-hearted, but not enough unselfishness so far.

"Conceited."—You are affectionate, but as yet too egotistical. Extremely quick to feel a slight of any kind, or to respond to a kindness. Have artistic perceptions, are a good deal influenced by beauty in people and surroundings, and so far impressionable in your likes and dislikes. Very quick in surmises, and not always as practical and level-headed in business matters as you might be. There is desire for travel, and ability for music—probably a stringed instrument. Very kind impulses; might be a degree thoughtless and forgetful of trifles. Very quick-tempered. Patience not as yet one of your virtues.

"Marsburg."—Your writing shows a good deal of restless energy, and very little contentment. The temper is a hot one, and there is a degree of "nerves," a tendency to prove dictatorial and overbearing in trifles, yet there are kind and sympathetic impulses. Would be too self-absorbed very often, and lacking in a ready sense of humour and adaptability; would let trifles annoy, and show too much obstinacy, while not really strong of purpose. A liking for country in preference to town.

X. Y. Z.—The affections are sincere, and there is a degree of caution and fastidiousness with regard to people and things. You have a sense of proportion and design; might draw, and show some constructive power, if artistic, in sculpture. Music, too, is shown. Might have a few "fads," and prove a trifle pedantic. Truthful and reliable. Show some promise of very independent judgment. Some bent for science.

W. H. M.—Possess business capacity, though office routine might get wearisome to you, and to judge by your writing your ambitions have not been fulfilled yet. Have connected ideas, some shrewdness and humour, a very kind heart, and generous impulses without waste. Would enjoy travel and out-door pursuits. Independent in judgment. At present struggling against depression; work or surroundings may not be congenial.

John Webster.—Would show some warmth and jealous feeling where the affections are concerned. There is a good deal of will-power, which too often merges into obstinacy, and constructive power of some kind. Might be clever at carpentry as a hobby. The character does not appear to be fully indicated as yet, though marked individuality is shown, together with some business shrewdness and caution. Kind-hearted and slightly egotistical.

"A Poor Artist."—Possess decided artistic ability, with good sense of colour and form. Not much courage or initiative. Would work well, but might prove dilatory in starting a venture. Have a very kind heart. Very reserved, and given to moods of depression. Very persistent will, with a good many prejudices. Proud, and have a love for children and animals.

Dorothy.—Your affections are warm and constant. You are practical rather than given to sentiment. Would show likes and dislikes very plainly. Energetic, plenty of courage. Your tastes do not show marked cultivation. Would probably enjoy gardening as a hobby. Good-natured, kind-hearted, but do not possess much tact.

Frances Tucker.—A very affectionate and impulsive temperament, with a good many enthusiasms and a love of beauty. Some literary and descriptive power is denoted. Imaginative and observant. Cheerful, but very highly strung. Clever with hands; probably have excellent taste in dress, and ability for music, embroidery, and languages.

"Yenton."—You possess quick powers of perception and scientific ability, some love of research, and a good deal of pride. You can be "touchy" under coercion. You have quickness of ideas, are somewhat nervous, and too hasty in judgments and temper. Would like everything on a good scale. Can do very kind and generous things. Would enjoy an argument.

"Kenneth," Evelyn Palthorpe, and many others are informed that their characters will be delineated by our expert when they have sent the required fee of sixpence to the Old Fag's Money Box. A number of delineations are held over from the present issue.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

[As we receive a great number of letters, our correspondents are requested to bear in mind that we can only comment on communications that we consider to be of general interest. Readers requiring information quickly should enclose stamped envelopes or postcards, according to the length of the answer they desire.]

The Old Fag begs to thank the following for Christmas and New Year cards: Guy Warren, E. G. Glassford (Australia), R. H. T. Smith, Morley Ewins, Francis McLeod, Edward Harry Manly, Gladys von Stralendorff, "Young Folkestonian," Clarence O. Hebbert, Eric B. Roberts, Jack L. (Canada), Randolph L. Pawlby, Leonard A. Pavey, Alfred Judd, G. S. R. Roper, T. Bones, Jnr., F. V. Griffith, "The Mastiff," Ernest L. Aubrey (South Africa), L. Sorzano (Trinidad), Porangi Potæ (New Zealand), A. Vernon Smith (New Zealand), Winifred D. Ereaut, "Peter."

W. W.—You are not too old to take Holy Orders, thirty being the nominal age limit. If you have not a knowledge of Greek, you will, before you can enter a theological college, have to procure a sufficient acquaintance with it to enable you to pass the "Central Entrance Examination." For this a Greek and Latin author are required, as well as one of the Gospels in Greek; Euclid, Scripture, and History are also subjects which must be got up. Papers set in previous examinations can be obtained from Messrs. Deighton, Bell and Co., Trinity Street, Cambridge, and further information concerning the Examination may be had from the Rev. Canon Daniell, The Old College, Dulwich, S.E. For Holy Orders a preparatory training of two years in a theological college is necessary, after the Central Entrance Examination has been passed. At the conclusion of the course the Preliminary Examination of

Candidates for Holy Orders has to be taken. The course (excluding the expenses of vacations), costs between £60 and £80 per annum. A degree is not given, but a diploma and a hood are, as a rule, granted to those who have satisfactorily passed through all the various stages. The papers given in previous examinations (Cambridge Preliminary), with Regulations, &c., may be obtained from Messrs. Parker and Co., Oxford, price 1s., while full details of the Course, expenses, &c. can be had of the Principals of any recognised theological colleges.

E. W. writes: "I should be very glad if you could let me know whether you think I have any poetic abilities, and if I have, whether they are worth practising up." Here is one verse of my correspondent's poem:

NOVEMBER.

Cold blows the breeze across the moor,
Dull shines the sun this day.
Dead leaves are rustling around the door,
And thick on every path they lay.

No, I don't think E. W. is a poet. He may become one, of course. There is no knowing what will happen in this world.

J. E. T. C. has ambitions to be a black-and-white artist, but his friends tell him he is not much good. He once attempted to draw a famous actor, and the first friend he showed the sketch to thought it was a picture of a rabbit hutch. Poor fellow! The samples he encloses are certainly not works of genius, being the kind of thing that thousands of schoolboys knock off when they ought to be doing their French and Latin. However, genius will out, in spite of all discouragements, and if J. E. T. C. is going to be a great black-and-white artist he will be one. But he must not think that, because he has drawn a thin gentleman with a big "corporation," he has necessarily produced a funny picture.

"Irons."—The benefits to be derived from cold baths, punching the ball, and the like, depend entirely on the constitution. Mr. C. B. Fry is of opinion that cold baths are a mistake. Tepid ones, he thinks, are the best, as they don't "let you down" later on in the morning, as cold are liable to do. Personally, I think that a cold bath is an excellent tonic for men and boys whose "machinery" (heart, lungs, liver, &c.) is sound. As for dumb-bell exercises, I should say the best time for them is an hour before your mid-day meal. It is not wise to tire yourself before breakfast. It is not difficult to change one's name. Some legal friend will be able to give you the necessary particulars. The way to get on a paper as an artist or reporter is to write to the Editor, saying that you want a job, and enclosing specimens of your work, with a stamped envelope for their return.

"Sadder but Wiser" is another correspondent who does not altogether approve of physical culture and would like to give as a warning his own unfortunate experience. "I was never strong," he says, "and my friends always chaffed me about my puny condition. So I made up my mind to go in for training. I purchased some dumb-bells and a developer, and I cycled, rowed, &c., with the result that I broadened my chest, but also strained myself internally. I am even now laid up with an enlarged liver. Would-be 'Milos,' take heed."—It must be borne in mind that this correspondent was in poor condition when he began to take violent exercise. Probably he overdid it.

G. T. Lawrence, 25 Grange Road, Lewes, Sussex, wishes to start a "Captain" Club in Lewes, and will be glad to hear from Captainites living in the neighbourhood. G. T. L. is informed that the best way to inaugurate a club is to start by meeting at one another's houses. When the club grows larger it can launch out into a special room.

"Patriotic."—You Scotch people are too sensitive. When a writer uses the word Englsh instead of British he means no discourtesy to the Scottish nation; it is simply that he has got into the habit of saying "English." As for Scotland being too often left out in the cold, well, all I can say is that Scotchmen hold most of the best billets in this country and the Colonies.

W. B.—The sum of sixpence, which goes into the O. F.'s Money-Box, is charged for a character delineation, and I will keep your letter by me until it arrives. Send a stamp for information about Club.

"The Men Who Discovered the World."—By an oversight, the biographical particulars relating to Colonel J. A. Grant were printed under the portrait of John Hanning Speke, and *vice versâ*. We thank "Northern Scot" for his correction.

F. W. D.—I will bear your suggestion in mind. It would certainly be interesting to have a "Handy Man's Corner," but the difficulty is to find space for it.

E. P.—When we ask for "unaided work," we want unaided work. You must get your runs off your own bat. That is our unalterable rule.

W. D. Warren.—I am always glad to consider black-and-white sketches from readers, especially those of a humorous nature.

"Sirrom."—Thanks. Will keep that suggestion for a competition by me.

THE OLD FAG.

The attention of all readers is called to advertisement page vi., where they will find full particulars of a novel and liberal scheme of Accident Insurance specially devised for their benefit.

Results of December Competitions.

No. I.—"Famous British Sailors."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF JOHN JAQUES AND SON'S "SPARTAN" FOOTBALL: Fred Paley, 4 Ashfield Avenue, Frizinghall, Bradford, Yorks.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: T. E. B. Jourdan, Alsabrook, Tiverton, Devon.

HONOURABLE MENTION: W. S. Leeming, R. W. Jepson, T. R. Davis, James S. Higgs, J. L. Arthur, A. M. Smallpiece, A. G. Marrian, C. A. Heathcote, A. R. Richardson, P. W. Braybrooke, W. G. Hay.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF JOHN JAQUES AND SON'S "SPARTAN" FOOTBALL: E. Alec Woolf, Mile End P. T. Centre, Essex Street, E.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: J. F. Beck, 21 Windsor Road, Doncaster.

HONOURABLE MENTION: A. R. Burnett-Hurst, W. C. Robinson, F. P. Harvey, P. E. A. Blair, R. J. Drury, Malcolm Turner, Eustace Ellis, H. W. Mottram, J. A. Beale, C. R. Rooney, K. Brayshay, N. Nettleship, Duncan McGruer, Peter Carmichael.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Twelve.)

WINNER OF JOHN JAQUES AND SON'S "SPARTAN" FOOTBALL: Charles Potter, "Midhurst," Ewell Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Thomas Montgomery, 1 Helsby Street, Sutton Oak.

HONOURABLE MENTION: S. P. Brown, P. K. Perkin, Vernon West, G. Wickman, H. Marr, H. J. Horspool, G. Hetherington, Morgan Hatfield, John Campbell, G. Morris, Charles Turner.

No. II.—"Best Review."

CLASS I. (No age limit.)

WINNER OF J. H. AYRES' COMPENDIUM OF INDOOR GAMES: Samuel J. Giles, Edwardstone Cottage, Boxford, Colchester.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Alex. Scott, Junr., Burnside House, Tillicoultry.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Nellie Kennedy, Arthur Hotnam, A. T. Davis, J. Y. Morris, C. A. Gibson, Mrs. H. Heynes, Ida Hagger, W. E. Raistrick, Charles Reed.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF J. H. AYRES' COMPENDIUM OF INDOOR GAMES: W. S. Leeming, 47 Hazelbank Road, Catford, S.E.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: F. T. Reeves, 311 Brockley Road, Brockley, S.E.

HONOURABLE MENTION: G. H. Marshall, L. F. Page, D. Day, W. J. Juleff, B. Weaver, L. Spero, James Bland, G. B. Hindmarsh, Percy Hartill, G. Phillips, C. B. Beveridge, J. Mildenhall.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF J. H. AYRES' COMPENDIUM OF INDOOR GAMES: J. B. Potts, 154 Albert Road, Jarrow-on-Tyne, Durham.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: S. C. Peacock, "Sunnylawn," St. Nicholas' Road, Barry, Glamorgan.

HONOURABLE MENTION: J. B. Greaves, A. P. Webster, O. E. Seyd, L. R. Russell, E. G. Hogan, O. W. Stanhope, T. R. Houston, W. Vernon Lewis, H. de Schmid, W. Westwood, N. T. James.

No. III.—"Photographic Competition."

CLASS I. (No Age limit.)

WINNER OF GAMAGE FOOTBALL: Mabel Walker, High Street, Redbourne.

HONOURABLE MENTION: E. S. Maples, A. Dickins, R. W. Copeman, Charles R. Barham, A. S. Pentelow, Eva Brooks, E. Aitken, T. A. Sivad, Frank Woodford.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF "GAMAGE" FOOTBALL: H. J. Saunders, 35 Westfield Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Frances Pitt, The Albynes, Bridgnorth.

HONOURABLE MENTION: H. D. Eves, Mabel Dallimer, W. E. Gundill, A. C. H. Adams, Matthew White, Owen Callard, A. R. Nicholson, L. E. Pastable, Vyvyan R. Poole, John Gray.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF "GAMAGE" FOOTBALL: Edward T. P. Goodyear, 49 Penywern Road, Earl's Court, S.W.

A CONSOLATION HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: F. B. Chavasse, The Palace, Liverpool.

HONOURABLE MENTION: T. H. Stern, Evelyn Palethorpe, L. C. Turnill, W. Huggan, Junr., R. F. Puzey, S. W. Peaty, D. G. Thomas, S. W. Burditt, C. C. Christie.

No. IV.—"Drawing Competition."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF F. DARTON AND CO.'S "ACME" TELESCOPE: Gordon S. McDonald, 277 Union Grove, Aberdeen, Scotland.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: A. S. Abercromby, 41 Elmfield Avenue, Aberdeen.

HONOURABLE MENTION: R. M. Thomas, Norah Disney, Thomas A. Morris, Samuel G. Oxborough, R. O. Nicholls, Gerald W. Atkinson, D. E. Tyler, A. G. Turner, Sidney W. Freeman, David H. Matthew, Daisy Farmer, F. C. Millington, Mary Marsh, C. A. Taylor, H. Hatton, Eva Freeth.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF F. DARTON AND CO.'S "ACME" TELESCOPE: Percy Butler, 137 Cox Street, Coventry.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: B. Frederick Oldham, 79 Lancashire Street, Belgrave, Leicester.

HONOURABLE MENTION: John H. Peters, James Duncan Stark, W. D. Creed, Fred. Barron, W. M. Sheddon, Frank G. Holloway, James Silcox, F. R. C. Newnham, Irvine H. Clark, Charles Turner, W. David Warren, E. C. Grinham.

No. V.—"A Telephone Talk."

(One Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF HAMLEY BROS.' BOX OF CONJURING TRICKS: J. S. Cohn, 3 Fairlawn Grove, Chiswick, W.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: Muriel Clay, 44 Albermarle Road, Beckenham; A. J. Turner, 14 McNiel Road, Camberwell, London, S.E.

HONOURABLE MENTION: J. H. Hield, D. W. Rennie, H. G. Gill, R. S. White, J. B. Greaves, A. D. C. Mason, B. Dudeney, D. A. Hilton, N. H. Guffick, Mary Findlay, L. Leece.

No. VI.—"Other Uses Competition."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF CHARLES MORRELL'S VERTICAL STEAM-ENGINE: Irene Lalonde, 14 Forester Road, Bath.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Gladys Russell Smith, Rosabelle, Totnes, S. Devon.

HONOURABLE MENTION: F. L. Tomlinson, E. F. Hadden, Maisie Munro, R. A. MacLean, John Austin, Edward Ricordan, Trelawny Greaves, Madge Kayss.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF CHARLES MORRELL'S VERTICAL STEAM ENGINE: Walter Sherwin, 16 Bishopthorpe Road, York.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Harold Mallinson, 71 Chasefield Road, Tooting Graveney, S.W.

HONOURABLE MENTION: R. B. Odgers, Herbert Fox, H. de Schmid, J. P. Wilson, Leslie R. Russell, L. M. Brown, K. McKeand, Diana Vernon, Herbert Beach, J. A. Millard, F. Raistrick.

Foreign and Colonial Readers (October).

No. I.—WINNER OF 5s.: Lee Matheson, Westville, Nova Scotia

HONOURABLE MENTION: H. J. Chuter, D. A. Turpin (India), H. Bennett (India), Aubrey du Toit (S. Africa), Ivy Stirke (S. Africa).

No. II.—WINNER OF 5s.: H. J. Chuter, c/o R. A. School, Campbellpar, Punjab, North India.

HONOURABLE MENTION: E. J. Waddington (Bermuda), Brian Harris (India), L. Ethel Davis (Demerara), Jack Loutet (Canada), M. Waterlow (Bermuda), Geoffrey Butler (Tasmania), J. M. Robinson (S. Africa), E. F. Leplastrier (Australia).

No. III.—WINNER OF 5s.: Arnold Brigden, 103 Rose Avenue, Toronto, Canada.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Chas. Inkster (Australia), W. Menzies (S. Africa), H. Wright (S. Africa), F. Hollington (Canada), G. A. Mount (S. Africa).

No V.—WINNER OF 5s.: Ernest Richard Thompson, Grey Street, Queenstown, South Africa.

HONOURABLE MENTION: S. S. Phalke (India), W. Nailer (India), Rita Goddard (S. Africa), E. Herbert Dosé (S. Africa), Brian G. Pearce (Jamaica), Noel Taitt (Trinidad), Eliot Gunter (Australia).

Winners of Consolation Prizes are requested to inform the Editor which they would prefer—a volume of one of our magazines, or one of the following books: "Cox's Cough-Drops." "The Duffer." "The Rising of the Red Man," "The Gold Bat," "J. O. Jones."

Comments on the December Competitions.

No I.—A correct list will be found on an advertisement page. As a great many competitors sent in correct solutions to the pictures, neatness counted considerably, though the standard was not so high in this respect as in the last entries of the same sort.

No II.—Many competitors fairly revelled in the task of criticising the critics. Several of the more thoughtful writers appreciated the fact that it is the interesting book that evolves the interesting review. On the whole, the answers showed an appreciation of the duties of the reviewer, and criticisms were thoughtful and well-grounded.

No. III.—The proportion of really good photographs was not large, but there were very creditable entries in each Class. Miss Walker's landscapes being particularly pleasing studies. Competitors would do well to pay more attention to toning, trimming and mounting their work

No. IV.—Speaking generally, there seemed to be very little pains taken except in the very praiseworthy cases of those competitors who appear to have made a special study of the subject. With regard to the bulk of the competitions, as long as something approximating to the shape of the bird was obtained, that was sufficient. The Art Editor would advise competitors to make more of a *study* of the subject set month by month.

No. V.—A certain number of amusing "Telephone Talks" were submitted, but many lacked originality in that they were modelled on the same lines, viz., either a play at the theatre or numbers and volumes of THE CAPTAIN.

No. VI.—A number of original suggestions were made in this by no means easy competition, and we heartily congratulate the winners on their ingenuity.

THE COMPETITION EDITOR.

THE ALL-DAY-AND-NIGHT WEAR.

LAZY LUKE: "'Ere, Frank, they say as 'ow the Prince of Wales only wears a suit once!"
FAT FRANK: "So do we—only it's a longer once!"

[Drawn by B. E. Pike.]

"WHAT SHIP'S THAT?" BELLOWED FREETON THROUGH HIS MEGAPHONE.

THE CAPTAIN

A MAGAZINE FOR BOYS AND "OLD BOYS"

VOL. XVI. MARCH, 1907. No. 96.

THE END OF THE CHASE

BY CAPTAIN FRANK H. SHAW.

Illustrated by E. S. HODGSON.

THERE was just enough fog in the Channel to render it advisable that the eyes of the lookouts should be well-skinned. Nothing to be afraid of, of course, for the distant light of St. Catherine's could be plainly seen winking furiously, though it was rather redder than it would have been on a fine night. The lights of the merchant fleets of the four great countries that use the Channel as a highway, rose somewhat suddenly ahead, flashed past, and disappeared as suddenly; but Captain Freeton was not at all nervous. He merely made a personal visit to the forecastle of the ss. *Rialto*, cast a penetrating glance at the mast-head and side-lights, spoke a word or two to the sailor on the lookout, and then strolled back to the bridge in comfort. He even paused for a moment to listen outside the forecastle door, whence the strains of a German concertina came weirdly.

"A man might safely have a nap," he remarked to the chief officer when he regained the bridge. "Nothing's going to happen this night; you mark my words. The lights are showing bright, the man on the forecastle's got over his longshore 'drunk,' and the fog don't seem inclined to thicken any."

The chief officer—Mark Raines, by name—made no suggestion worthy of note.

Captain Freeton stumped stolidly aft, and looked over the taffrail at the sternlight—a guide to such vessels as might overtake the *Rialto*. It burned steadily, throwing a wide arc of light over the foamy wake left by the throbbing screw. Then he shredded a pipeful of "Lucky Hit," set it going to his satisfaction, and went back to the bridge.

"Not that I believe in going below till the start's astern," he went on as though there had been no interruption. "No good skipper does. Get the Atlantic swell lifting your bows a bit before you go for a caulk, that's my motto. It's the way I've trained every man I've had under me this last forty years, and never a man but what's turned out a credit to me. There's men I could mention, started under me, and now they walk their own bridges strapped to the eyes in gold lace, with six or seven officers to do their work for 'em, and every one an extra-master. Never a mistake made by one of the boys, bless 'em. They're a credit to me. A bit different from this old hooker, isn't it, Raines? Six or seven officers against our two! Well, I ain't complaining; a man gets what he deserves in this life, I've found out. It's a matter of education nowadays that gets a man on."

The two men—the old and the young—stood side by side on the little tramp's bridge, and watched the floating castles speed past them up and down Channel. They rushed abeam in all their bravery of glittering portholes, surged past in a smother of foam as they reeled off their twenty knots, foreshortened, and then drew ahead, leaving

SLOWLY THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE TWO DECREASED. THE TRAMP

only the one steadfast eye glaring from their sterns, until that too disappeared; then another grew up and took the lost one's place.

"And the skipper's standing at attention aboard every one of 'em," said Captain Freeton. "Dropped their pilots at Dungeness, they did, and there's no sleep for the old man until he's cleared Ushant, except for them that put into Southampton. One hand on the telegraph, and the other trying to get a decent meal into the mouth. That's the style aboard the liners, my lad; and just you remember my words. Time will come when you're up there, with four thick gold rings on your cuffs, and your own steward to put out your clean shirt and collar every night before dinner. Oh, I know it—it's different from this end of the trade. But it's the training in this style of craft that gets a man on the big flying bridges."

The mate listened interestedly. Like many of his class—the new order of seamen—he was disposed to pooh-pooh the old-fashioned axioms of the past generation, but old Freeton could be interesting when in the right vein, and as such was worth a hearing.

St. Catherine's drew abeam, glared rudely out over the cold, dark waters, and then sank out of sight. A rising wind flashed a capful of chilly spray across the *Rialto's* bows, and the forward motion of the steamer carried it to the bridge. It took the watching men in the eyes, and before they had finished anathematising the fates, the thing happened.

"I'll slip below to get an oil-skin," said Freeton, wringing out his sleeves; "just you keep her—sakes alive, what's that!"

A confused roar of voices and a frantic bellowing from a steam syren of the latest pattern filled the sombre stillness of the night. It came from right aft, and there was menace in the sound. The two men, turning like automata, saw the towering bow of a gigantic liner bearing steadily down upon their stern.

Freeton snatched up a megaphone and

WAS ALMOST IN THE LINER'S WASH.

bellowed in a voice that would have wakened the ocean's graveyards:

"Port your hellum! Port your hellum, you no-sailor you! Got the carpenter on watch, ain't ye? Tell your skipper that a seasick man shouldn't be allowed out at night. Yah!"

Some one shouted back an answer, consigning the tramp to the lowest depths of her native sea. But it was too late for recriminations. The man in command of the liner altered his course just a second too late. The razor bow cleared the *Rialto's* stern easily, but the sudden swerve from the shifted helm brought the great vessel's counter crushing down aboard the tramp. Her stern rails bent inward with an ominous crunch; two or three snaps like pistol-shots told where the overstrained rivets had cast themselves free from their service; the *Rialto* rocked drunkenly, plunged wildly forward, dipped her port rail under water, and then paused as though aghast at the happening.

"What ship's that?" bellowed Freeton through his megaphone. "Let me have your name and come-from! I'll report you, you lubber, ay, and get your ticket suspended! Let's have your name."

There was no sound now from the liner. She was drawing ahead of the tramp, and the darkness suddenly seemed to grow more intense as her illuminated sides disappeared into the gloom. She had come like a ghost of the night, had made her visitation, and was vanishing in obscurity. Through the rapidly thinning mist there came at last a mocking laugh.

"Get aft there, Mark, and see the damage," said the skipper thickly. "Look alive now."

The mate made his way through the little crowd of gaping seamen and firemen who had clustered at the foot of the bridge-ladder when the collision occurred, and returned shortly with his report.

"Counter-plates all stove in, sir. A dint as big as a trawler's hold in the stern; all the rails carried away—but that's all. The stern-light still burns bright."

"Oh, does it?" said the skipper angrily. "Very good—very good indeed. Now, Mark, my lad, we'll dig out after that brass-bound Juggernaut, and follow him till daylight, if we have to tear the engines off their bedplates. I'll find out his name if I chase him down to Gib., and it won't be the fault of Simon Freeton, master-mariner, if he hasn't to pay a big bill for this night's bit of fun. Tell the chief I want him."

The chief engineer came leisurely to the bridge, and the captain almost fell on his neck. "Give us every bit of steam you can make, Tom!" he cried. "Double the watches, and you can have as many of the deck hands as you like. We've taken on a big contract, for you've got to overhaul that massacring hotel there before morning. Can ye do it?"

The chief engineer glowed with professional pride. He was a Scotchman—every engineer afloat is—and he had an almost childlike faith in his engines.

"It's a big bit job," he vouchsafed, "but we'll e'en dae oor best. Gin I had anither twa hands in the bunkers, there's nae tellin' I micht dae it. Frae the thud she struck us wi'—I was on the aifter deck at the time—I doot she'll hae twisted the blades o' her propeller some. That's where we'll score."

He disappeared below, and a volley of the kind of language that has its natural home in a tramp's stokehold came hurtling up the ventilators. Freeton rubbed his hands as the tramp surged forward like a wounded deer.

"I'm part owner of this ship," he remarked to Raines, "and I'll get my own back after all. I saw to it that she was engined above her strength—trust me for that, though we don't drive her beyond ten knots at the average. But this is a special occasion, and Mac there'll whack her up to fifteen for this occasion only; you see if he don't."

The blinking light ahead, that told of the presence of the offending liner, did not disappear. Though walls of fog drooped over the surface of the agitated sea, the *Rialto* held her own sturdily; pushing her way into the growing Atlantic combers like a battleship. The throb of her engines made her decks shake like tin cans; her stays and masts set up a witches' dance to the night, her swaying masthead light quivered in errant flickers of light and shade.

The great constellation of the Bear sprang out of the fog astern, ascended giddily overhead to where the star-studded sky hung like a purple pall above the shimmering fog-walls, and then sank to the west, while the *Rialto* followed it doggedly to its rest. Every half-hour a faint tinkle rang across the water from the pursued liner, as the bells were struck, but there was no answer from the tramp. The widening Channel lifted the little vessel in the arms of its booming swell as a mother lifts her child; then, like the same mother, snugged it into a closer embrace in the raw valleys of the hurrying waves. Foam flecks showed whitely against the sombre background; they lifted jauntily inboard, and swept the decks with a rush and a swirl. From time to time a deep thud told of the intrusion of a mightier wave; but still the dogged skipper held his vessel dead into the eye of the growing gale, and never moved from his post. Once the helmsman, new to the job, allowed the wheel to swing uncontrolled, and the bow of the tramp made a wide arc across the sea; but Freeton had that helmsman reduced to the semblance of a wet rag before five minutes were past, and so long as his trick endured, there were no more derelictions of duty. The ship's bow ploughed on in an undeviating straight line, silently and remorselessly as Fate herself.

About four in the morning the thin fog fled before the advance of the gale; and a faint glimmer astern told of the approaching dawn. Although there was hardly a suggestion of light as yet, it was still possible to make out that a gale of no ordinary power was brooding in the piled masses of cloud to the sou'west. There was an indescribable mutter to be heard in the wind, and the gusts soughed away in a manner that told of forces yet unchained. It was a morning to give the captain of such a small steamer as the *Rialto* pause. Bound for Newfoundland as she was, she should have been hugging the south coast of England, but the booming breakers on the French coast could now be heard singing their solemn undertone to the dawn.

"We'll get a wetting if we hold on much longer," said the second mate, who had relieved the chief at eight bells.

"Ay, we'll get all that," answered Freeton, and then, sarcastically: "Afraid of getting a drop of water down your neck, my son?"

"Not I," said the second mate, flushing redly. "I can stand a drenching as well as any man, but this seems a fool's game to me. What good will it do you if you do

see his name? He'll swear black and blue that our stern light was out, and they'll take his word before the words of a dozen like us. That skipper's a lieutenant in the Reserve, and he'll have the Guild solicitor at his back before a week's past. Take my advice and dig out on your proper course, sir."

"I'll take your advice when I ask for it, my lad," said Freeton grimly. "Meanwhile, attend to the steering. That man's half a degree off his course at this minute, and we can't allow that."

Granger, the second mate, returned to his post sulkily, and made a point of stamping his feet angrily whenever the skipper's face was turned in his direction.

Meanwhile the men of the crew, to whom the occurrence was known, were leaning over the fore bulwarks, careless of the wettings they received, backing the *Rialto* against the liner. It seemed to be an even chance so far, for the engineer's surmise about the injured propeller was apparently founded on fact. Under ordinary circumstances the liner should have been long ago out of sight ahead, but still the single light shone wanly through the growing dawn.

Firemen coming off watch, stopped at the door of their forecastle to hear the story, and, hearing, hung over the bulwarks too, betting preposterously on the result of the chase. The excitement grew as the light increased. Soon the dim 'twixt lights gave place to a dull daylight, and the shadowy mass ahead resolved itself into the round stern of a mighty sea-castle. Her white quarter showed plainly now, and a blurred mass on her stern told of the presence of her name and the name of her port.

"A Union boat," said Freeton grimly. "It'll be something in her skipper's eye to find that he's been held up by a cheap tramp." Then he attached himself to the engine-room speaking-tube, and besought the chief engineer by all the gods of mechanism to "crowd on just another revolution." The chase was at its last lap now. There was not an inch of difference between the relative positions of the two ships from what had been the case when the pursuit first started. But even the best glasses on the *Rialto* failed to make anything determinate out of the lettering on the liner's stern. As Freeton watched she hooted defiantly, and it would seem as though extra speed had been given to her, for her stern cocked itself jauntily, and the broad, white wake astern broadened.

"Just another revolution, Tom!" almost sobbed Freeton down the tube. "Never mind if you have to carry away your guides—just give us another revolution."

Tom heard and made reply. The *Rialto*, already doing her best, answered to the call, and sprang forward like a thing of life. The high green rollers flattened themselves before her imperious advance, and swung high astern as though in wonderment at such a sight. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the distance between the two decreased. The tramp was almost in the liner's wash by this, and the glasses in Freeton's hands quivered before his excited eyes. Letter by letter the name grew up before his gaze—he read it under his breath, prior to giving the shout that would tell the whole ship's company that his chase had not been in vain. Raines, the mate, was at his elbow by this; he, too, was quivering with the universal excitement.

"What is she?" he asked breathlessly, and then stared astounded. For Captain Freeton had laid down the glasses with something like a groan.

"Port your hellum," he yelled to the man at the wheel. "Get her on her course, Granger. No"—he said this under his breath to the mate—"no, we won't report him. You see, it's the *Mormon*—and—and *my own son's in command of her.* I brought him up myself. Seems the training ain't everything after all—but wait till I see him ashore again!"

MARCH CELEBRITIES.

By Readers of "The Captain."

ROBERT BRUCE—MICHAEL ANGELO—JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH—ANTONY VAN DYCK—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING—LORD MILNER.

Robert Bruce.

ROBERT BRUCE, who was born in March 1274, was the grandson of the Bruce who had striven with Baliol in 1292. Like his grandfather, he was more an English baron than a pure Scot. He had taken Edward's side in the Civil Wars, hoping that his fidelity might be rewarded by the gift of the Scottish throne. Receiving no such guerdon, he conspired with some of the Scottish earls, and endeavoured to get Comyn, the late Regent, to join him. When Comyn refused, Bruce slew him, and fled to the north.

Then he gathered his followers at Scone, and had himself crowned King of Scotland. But his royalty was very short-lived, for few of the Scots would join him, and his army was beaten and dispersed by De Valence, Earl of Pembroke, while Bruce himself had to take to the hills. Edward punished the rebels with great severity, but in doing so strengthened Bruce's position by giving him many new partisans.

He soon got together another army, and, in 1312, took Edinburgh, and many other towns. Edward II., the son of the former king, marched against him with a huge army, but was defeated at Bannockburn in 1314. This battle completely demolished the last chance of the union of England and Scotland, and for the future, Bruce was undisputed king north of the Tweed.

In 1320 a truce was proclaimed, and, two years later, Bruce was formally acknowledged by the English as King of Scotland. The truce was respected for thirteen years. In 1328, however, the treaty was broken by Bruce, who sent James, "The Black Douglas," to harry England with a large following. Bruce did not lead the host himself because he was getting old, and was also stricken with leprosy. He died the next year, leaving the throne to his son, David II.

Bruce was the most ambitious man of his day, and his career was that of a hardy adventurer rather than of a patriotic king. It was from the atrocities committed on both sides during those fatal years 1306-1314, that the long national quarrel drew its bitterness, and Bruce, who began his reign with treason, murder, and usurpation, was largely responsible for all this.

J. H. POWELL.

Michael Angelo.

MICHAEL ANGELO, the greatest of sculptors, was born on March 6, 1475. He was first apprenticed to Ghirlandajo, a painter at Florence, where Lorenzo the Magnificent, head of the house of the Medici, amazed at his work, took him into his own house, and brought him up amongst his own children. At his patron's

MICHAEL ANGELO.
From a painting by himself. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

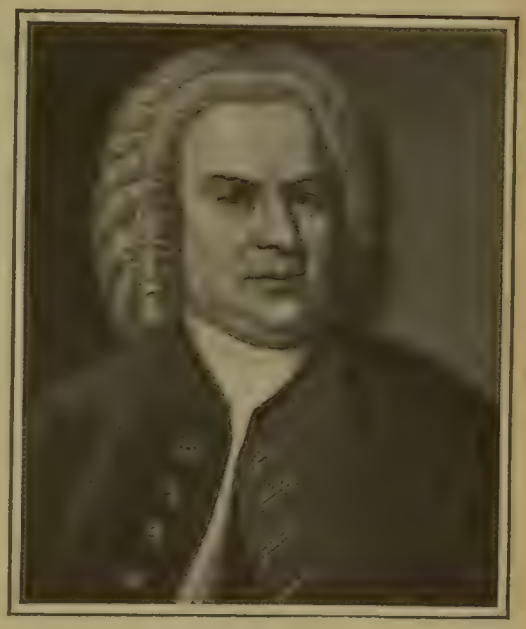
death, Michael travelled to Bologna, where he attracted the attention of Cardinal St. Giorgio, and was invited to Rome. Here he executed his *Pietà*, or the Virgin bending over the dead Christ, one of his most famous works. Shortly after he returned to Florence and carved the colossal *David* out of a shapeless mass of marble, spoilt by many sculptors, which was lying in the great square. By this time, Michael Angelo was too great a man to escape notice, and the Pope, Julius II., called him to Rome, and entrusted to him the painting of the new Sistine Chapel, the ceiling of which he decorated with scenes from the Old Testament.

He then executed the greatest work of his life, the mausoleum of the Medici family in the church of San Lorenzo. On his return to Rome he was appointed architect of St. Peter's and built the great dome, that masterpiece of the designer's art.

An injury, sustained from a slip on the scaffolding, from which he never recovered, added to the distress he felt at the death of his faithful and dearly loved servant, Urbino, hastened his end. He was buried at Florence.

Thus ended an unhappy and austere life, but one the austerity and passionateness of which lent a vigour and energy to its work, giving to it a greater interest than that excited by the work of the mild and unimpassioned Raphael, who has been erroneously accounted the first of painters.

PAUL O'B. GIBSON.



JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH.
From an engraving. Rischgitz Collection.

Johann Sebastian Bach, born March 31, 1685.

AT the end of the seventeenth century the art of music was in a flourishing condition all over Europe. The Continent had just recovered from the effects of the Thirty Years' War, and the importance and value of art, and more particularly of musical art, were slowly being realised. Music was developing from the crude, undeveloped condition in which it had been before the war to the powerful germ from which modern music has grown. During that period of musical history, of which Bach and Handel are the chief ornaments, every branch of the art changed.

The prime factor in this movement was J. S. Bach. He composed an enormous amount of music, embracing almost every form except opera. The greater part of it was written to supply his immediate necessities as a *capellmeister*, and includes two hundred and thirty cantatas; three oratorios; the "Wohltemperarte Clavier" for pianoforte; twelve suites and fifteen concertos for pianoforte; over thirty-nine long organ works; fifteen symphonies in three parts; seven overtures for orchestra, and hundreds of shorter pieces for organ, pianoforte, and various orchestral instruments. With few exceptions all these were intended for church use, and showed throughout a great depth of feeling and solemnity of thought, a grandeur of expression and concentration, all of which are characteristic of the stolid German musician. Bach entered deeply into the spirit of the few masters he knew, and, grasping their principles, formed from them a style of his own, which has raised German music to that high level which it maintains up to the present day.

Bach's importance in the history of music lies in the fact that, starting with orchestral music, he developed all forms of musical expression in a new manner. In theory he made the change from the strict counterpoint of his predecessors to the free part writing of himself and his successors; he altered both the method of playing and also that of tuning the pianoforte; in musical form he added the finishing touches to the fugue, which was already highly developed, and for the organ he wrote a variety of new forms which considerably altered the system of playing. The effect of his music may be distinctly traced in that of

the later masters, and, as Schumann has truly said, "Music owes almost as great a debt to Bach as a religion owes to its founder."

GEORGE ARTHUR BIRKETT.

VAN DYCK.

From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery
Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

Van Dyck.

ANTHONY VAN DYCK, the son of a merchant of good standing, was born in Antwerp on March 22, 1599. While he was yet a child, he began to paint, and at fifteen years of age he proceeded to the studio of the great Flemish painter Rubens, becoming when only nineteen a master in the Guild of Antwerp painters. Van Dyck came to London for the first time in 1620. From 1626 to 1632 he was back in Antwerp, where he executed his most important works and produced, in rapid succession, the magnificent altar-pieces which adorn many churches in Antwerp and Flanders.

In 1632 some superior power, of which he was himself unconscious, urged him to seek a scene of action more in harmony with his talent, and he visited London once more. On his first presentation to Charles I. he obtained permission to paint the portraits of the King and Queen. He was soon after appointed principal painter to the Stuart Court, also receiving the honour of knighthood and a pension of £200 a year. As many as thirty-eight portraits of Charles I. and thirty-five of Queen Henrietta were painted by him. Charming pictures from his brush of the royal children are also to be seen in the galleries of Windsor, Turin, and Berlin.

Van Dyck portrayed all the great personages at the Court of Whitehall. There are three hundred and fifty of his pictures in the country seats and private collections of England and Scotland; no other country can show such a splendid collection of his works, or, indeed, so prodigious an assemblage of works by any one master. Van Dyck left England to travel about the Continent with his wife, and after a stay in Flanders he returned once more, only to find, like his patron Charles I., that he had fallen on bad times. The Civil War had commenced, and whilst trumpets were sounding, and dark days for England were coming, Van Dyck died in Blackfriars on December 9, 1641. He was buried in Old St. Paul's, hard by the tomb of John of Gaunt.

Like Holbein and Raphael, he was a great portrait-painter, but in a manner quite new and all his own; inferior, perhaps, but so brilliant, so successful and charming, no memories are capable of exciting more emotion than those conjured up by his pictures.

WILLIAM B. COOK.

Lord Milner.

ON March 23, 1854, Alfred Milner was born, of English parents, at Würtemburg, Germany, in which country he received his early education, afterwards proceeding to King's College, London, whence he went to Balliol, where he was soon looked upon as one of the coming men.

Leaving Oxford, he was called to the Bar, but did not practise, taking up journalism instead, and becoming sub-editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, under the editorship of Mr. Stead. On leaving the *Pall Mall Gazette* he stood for Harrow as a Liberal, but was defeated. In 1887, he was private secretary to Mr. (now Viscount) Goschen, and showed such a marked ability for financial affairs that, in 1889, he was sent out to Egypt to look into the finances of that country, and it was his hard work that presaged a new era of prosperity for her. Lord Milner made Britons proud of Egypt, whereas formerly they had been rather ashamed of the

country. In 1892 he became Chairman of the Inland Revenue. This much-coveted post he relinquished five years afterwards to take up the position of Lord High Commissioner in South Africa, an office he held until 1905. During the Boer War he nobly upheld the prestige of Britain, and, as the *Times* said, carried on all that is best in the Rhodes tradition, inspiring "the best minds in South Africa with something of his own courage and hope."

Lord Rosebery has aptly described his colleague as "the union of intellect with fascination which makes men mount high," and he well merits the description, being, at the comparatively early age of fifty-three, one of the most potent figures in the Empire, and destined to write his name still larger on the scroll of fame as one of Britain's greatest sons.

T. W. Spikin.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, born March 6, 1806.

That Elizabeth Barrett Browning has been justly called "a princess among the poets" no one will deny, though as to her claim to the title of the greatest poet of her sex there must always be a certain opposition. However, her genius is incontestable. From birth Fate had been harsh to her, but her early troubles were soon forgotten after her glorious marriage.

Considering her own misfortunes, it is hardly to be wondered at that much of her best work was performed in behalf of those with whom Fate had dealt unkindly. "The Cry of the Children" is a striking illustration of her intense and sympathetic feeling in the cause of those in any way badly treated. Her poems are characterised throughout by that tender and profound sympathy which has seldom, if ever, been excelled.

Mrs. Barrett Browning's genius had two sides—lyrical and dramatic. In lyrical composition she was perhaps greater than either Campbell or Tennyson, though the former, on many occasions, proves himself her equal. In the greatest of her dramatic works, "Aurora Leigh," she has been condemned by some

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.
From a sketch. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

for creating improbable situations, and using somewhat unconventional expressions; but it must be acknowledged that in none other of her works is there such variety of humour, such pathos, such depth of feeling and power of description as are here portrayed. Compression would, no doubt, have improved the poetic force and popularity of many of her earlier poems; and the length of her poems is one of her critics' favourite weapons. The letters which passed between Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, besides adding to the renown of the writers, form valuable additions to the literature of the nineteenth century.

Her writings were always enthusiastically received, except perhaps by her father, and it is in no small degree to this favourable reception that the world owes her best works, for had her early works failed, the shock to her frail constitution would possibly have been fatal.

Frederick John Neal.

IN SEARCH OF SMITH,

A Romance of Unexplored Australia.

By JOHN MACKIE.

Author of "The Rising of the Red Man," "The Heart of the Prairie," &c.

Illustrated by R. Caton Woodville.

The party in search of Smith is much concerned one morning by finding that Madge has disappeared. Sir Donald, Dr. Payne and Maitland are endeavouring to locate her whereabouts—their only guide being a woman's coo-ee that they have heard—when their progress is arrested by a gap which has been deliberately made in the cliff path which they are traversing. Maitland therefore begins to hew footsteps in the cliff-side, so that he may thus gain the far side of the gap. Madge, it will be remembered, has fallen into the hands of Hawker, the outlaw, to whose lair this path leads.

CHAPTER XIX.—(*continued*).

IN HAWKER'S CLUTCH.

IN a few minutes Madge's grim host returned.

"Yer nag has gone cavoorting down that old creek like mad," he explained, as if pleased with the fact. "I jest clapped a burr under its crupper, an' no dog with a tin can to its tail ever started away in better shape. Guess it'll be 'bout a hundred miles from here by this time."

"It will go right back to camp," thought the girl, but she said nothing.

Hawker bustled about, put the billie on the fire, drew a bush baking-board—a square of leather—from a pack bag, untied a small bag of flour, and finally turned to Madge.

"Now, my dear," he said, "it's soon t' ask ye to begin yer domestic dooties, but I've promised myself a treat. Will ye bake some Johnnie cakes, enough for the tew of us?"

It was better than being obliged to eat bread he had made. Moreover, Madge had a healthy appetite, despite her distress of mind, and did not feel at all like starving. In a very few minutes the desperado, with the aid of a short stick, was turning over the cakes she had flung on the sweet, hot charcoal. He insisted on her taking the only pannikin, while he used the lid of the billie. It was an extraordinary sight, the pretty and refined girl, and the grim desperado and murderer, seated opposite each other on that ledge between heaven and earth, breakfasting together.

"I have meat," he observed apologetically, noting with evident concern the girl's appetite, "only it's wallaby, and I fancies you wouldn't much care for that."

"I shouldn't imagine it's in your power to vary your diet much in these parts," commented Madge, who felt called upon to make a remark that no exception could be taken to.

Just then a rifle shot, with a remarkable series of echoes, rang out far down the valley. Madge started to her feet.

"Sit down, my dear. That ain't of any consequence," said the outlaw, calmly.

Two or three times that day the searchers for Madge were actually within hail of her, but on each occasion Hawker was at her elbow, and ordered her into the gallery that ran back from the ledge.

She had the run of that long winding gallery, but she found that just where it reached a point some fifteen feet or so from the summit of the cliff, it broke abruptly off, and there was no hope of escape in that direction.

At last, evening came on, and it grew dark. Hawker threw the remaining firewood over the cliff so that she might not be able to make a fire with it and thus attract attention. To her entreaties that he should now allow her to go, he turned a deaf ear. She told him that her uncle would not only make him a solid consideration, but would guarantee secrecy regarding his whereabouts.

Hawker did not seem to hear her. The mint could hardly be expected to weigh with a man who knew the scaffold stood between him and the spending of even a penny.

Later on, when the moon rose, he took a prospector's pick from a corner, and, bidding her follow him, descended the fragile path. It was so narrow that she realised that, had it been daylight, and she could have seen farther, she would surely have become giddy and lost her foothold. Ascending and looking upwards was another matter. Before they reached the narrowest and most dangerous part, he told her to stop and prepare to go back. Then he deliberately turned and demolished the slender foothold between them. He retired backwards, and destroyed several yards of it.

"You can't come furder," he said, "so you'll have to go back. It'll be a bit of a job for me to get to you again, but I'm a cat, I am."

Horror-stricken, and trembling in every limb, Madge made back to surer foothold. She was surely cut off from all succour now. The only thing left for her was to wait until he got some distance away, and then coo-ee for help in the hope that some of her party might be in the neighbourhood and hear.

It was the most terrible night she had ever spent in her life. She called again and again, until she thought her voice must fail her altogether. Far down the valley she had seen a red glare in the sky, and she knew that a great bonfire was burning on top of a high rock. How she was ever to get down now, even if help came, goodness only knew. She noted that a gentle breath of wind was passing from west to east, and she opined that that would convey the sound of her voice in the right direction. Then, despite the cold and the peril that menaced, she lay down on the shelf and went to sleep until awakened by the sound of Maitland's pick.

It was slow work, but at the end of a quarter of an hour Maitland had worked his way several feet from where we stood. I could hardly understand how he managed to cling to the cliff. He reminded me of a fly negotiating a pane of glass.

Just at that moment the first rays of the rising sun glanced athwart the cliff tops. The thin mist that hitherto had hidden the depths beneath lifted. A drop of some hundreds of feet revealed itself. And then it was as if what occurred was indeed a nightmare, for round the bend of the rock and down the

"YOU CAN'T COME FURDER," HE SAID.

DOWN THE NARROW PATH CAME THE LOST ONE—MADGE!

narrow path that ended the other side of the gap came the lost one—Madge!

When I look back upon that scene now, the thought of it almost stops the beating of my heart, as it did at that moment.

Our first impulse was to cry out, but the thought and sight of Maitland, whom it seemed a breath of air would dislodge, held us silent. I cannot say what Sir Donald did, but I know I lifted one hand warningly and pointed to the plucky man whose life was in the balance. He had struck a piece of hard rock. He was making little or no headway, and it was impossible for him to retreat.

Madge realized the situation at a glance, and I could see her face pale as Maitland looked up at her. He either could or dared not speak.

"Rest for a minute or two," she cried to him with unnatural calmness. "I'm all right, and there's no need for you to hurry."

I heard Sir Donald behind me thank God, but he did not trust himself to speak further.

The girl looked round, and then her gaze rested on the rope that Maitland carried coiled over one shoulder.

"If you could manage to throw me one end of that rope, Mr Maitland," she said, "there's a jutting piece of rock, I think, would hold it at this end."

It was a risky thing to do, but with one hand Maitland lifted the coil from his shoulders and, gripping one end in his teeth, threw the spare of the rope to her. She caught it deftly.

"Tie it fast round your body," she directed. "But first hold on to it tightly, and let me make it secure at this end."

She slipped her end twice round a jutting pinnacle of rock, and he made his fast round his body.

A few minutes later he stepped on to the opposite ledge. Madge caught him by both hands. Neither of them spoke a word; it was a situation beyond speech. As for Sir Donald and myself, we have both tacitly agreed to forget what we actually did say or do within the next few minutes.

Having assured himself of the fact that he and Madge would have to descend by the way he had climbed up, Maitland threw us the end of the rope, which Sir Donald and I, lying flat

on the ledge, held on to. Then, availing themselves of the rope's trusty aid, Maitland and Madge at length succeeded in joining us.

There was no parade of emotion when, safe and sound, the girl confronted her uncle—no matter what both of them must have felt. To hide his feelings the General abruptly turned his back on his niece, and imperilled the safety of the entire party by violently shaking hands with Maitland. This accomplished, he led the way down the terrace.

CHAPTER XX.

HOLT AND BIRD SHOW THEIR COLOURS.

ASKING innumerable questions and answering them, we followed down the shaded bottom of the dry watercourse that hugged the cliff. Once more we entered the tree-clad arena in which the fortress-like rock rose up sheer and grim. We skirted it on the north side so as to gain the place of ascent. It was broad day now; the laughing jackass had ceased his noisy cachinnation, and the organ-magpie instead chanted his beautiful song. Suddenly, as we forced our way through a thicket of golden wattle, we heard a cry from a human throat, such as I devoutly hope no one who reads this tale may ever hear.

"They've quarrelled amongst themselves, and are murdering some one," cried Sir Donald, rightly interpreting the situation.

Telling Maitland to stay behind with Madge, Sir Donald and I pushed through the thicket. We were too late. In the distance we could see two or three disappearing forms. On the ground was a prostrate figure. Coming up to it, the ghastly situation was plain.

There lay the dreaded desperado, Hawker, on his back, with wide-open eyes staring fixedly up at the inscrutable heavens. He was hatless, and a great gash, terrible to look at, parted his grizzled head, obviously caused by the tomahawk we found alongside him. I recognised that tomahawk in a moment. It was Bird's—a large B. was burned into the handle.

"We can't do anything here," I said. "Let's get back to Madge. The sooner we are in camp the better. There's danger in the air."

As I spoke, a bullet sent the bark flying from a tree close to Sir Donald's head. Following close upon it a volley from unseen foes awakened us to the extreme danger of our position.

"There's no questioning your point," cried Sir Donald. "Let's circle so as not to draw their fire in the direction of the others. Run low, and dodge."

I do not suppose two middle-aged men ever made better time than we did. It would have been folly to have attempted a stand and to return their fire. In a few minutes we had rejoined Madge and Maitland.

"Come on, my dear," Sir Donald cried to the girl. "Hawker is dead, and Holt, Bird and Company have hoisted their colours."

We needed no incentive. We forced our way from clump to clump of undergrowth, and the mutineers pressed us hard. Our position had become one of extremest danger when *bang*, *bang*, *bang*, and we realised that for the moment, at least, fortune was in our favour.

"Hurrah!" cried Sir Donald. "It's Jack and Bailey. I hope to goodness they'll take care of themselves and not be rash. We can't afford to lose men!"

As we pressed on to join them, we caught sight of Jack incautiously galloping out into the open as if to make for our assailants. Sir Donald bawled at the top of his trumpet-like voice to stop him, but it was of no use. Bailey was also shouting to him.

"Confound the boy!" cried Sir Donald, beside himself with vexation and grievous apprehension; "he's riding to certain death. When will an Englishman learn to fight with his brains!"

It was only too true. Jack, like many more, was mistaking foolhardiness for courage.

Forgetting our own peril, we rushed forward just in time to see Bird step boldly from behind a tree-trunk and cover the rash youth with his rifle. All Jack could do was to try and control his horse, when it was too late.

Doubtless it was this questionable and otherwise ill-judged action that saved him, for his steed, violently checked in its career, and startled by the sudden appearance of a human being from behind a tree, swerved and plunged violently. At the same moment Bird fired. Even at the distance at which we were, we could see the horse flinch as the traitor's bullet caught it fair on the jugular. It came down on its knees, and the blood gushed from the wound. Jack half slipped, and slid to the ground. Up went Bird's gun again to his shoulder, and he moved a step or two to one side so as to get a better shot. But before he could draw the trigger, I managed to cover him and fire. He dropped his rifle and slapped his hand to the side of his head. I had shot off

an ear—a lucky fluke, if any one will have it so!

Jack must undoubtedly have been shot had not another distraction occurred at that moment. There was a drumming of horses' hoofs, and we knew that Bailey and Martin had come upon the scene. These old hands knew better than to rush right into the lion's mouth. They stopped in the neighbourhood of some boulders and opened fire on the mutineers. In the surprise and confusion that followed, Jack managed to make good his escape.

sharp-eyed black boys, filled us with new dismay. Streaming up the valley through the gorge, like a swarm of black ants, was a band of wild blacks. They were literally in hundreds, and darkened the ground as they came. Even at that distance we could see they were armed with spears and shields.

It was Madge who interpreted the situation. It astonished me to find how remarkably coolly she took the terrifying position of affairs.

"It's our friend, Crocodile," she explained, "and he's staked his all in facing his tribe

UP WENT BIRD'S GUN AGAIN.

We joined forces with the relief body, and then engaged in a running fight with the mutineers. Maitland, with praiseworthy foresight, had insisted on Madge's making for the camp, and himself accompanied her.

There were now Sir Donald, Jack, Bailey, Martin, and myself, against Sam Holt, Bird, and Brock; and that without reserves in the shape of Maitland and Parker at the camp. Surely we would be more than a match for the enemy!

We had no sooner succeeded in reaching the camp and taking up our position at the neck of the plateau on the top of the rise, than a certain announcement, shouted by one of the

again. They have spared him because he has told them about us.

"Get out the ammunition boxes, Bailey," yelled Sir Donald, "and that case with the red circle on it. We'll give them something more than they have bargained for."

CHAPTER XXI.

SMITH AT LAST!

THE case Sir Donald referred to was quickly opened, and to our intense satisfaction disclosed a small quick-firing Colt's machine-gun in perfect working order. In a few minutes more it was

mounted behind a schanze, or low wall of rock, and ready for developments. Sir Donald himself was the gunner, and doubtless it was a unique position for a British general to occupy.

Ten minutes more and the situation was one that would have appalled a less stout-hearted little band. It was, indeed, a providential thing that we were entrenched in such a position of natural defence. Had we been in the open, with all sides liable to attack, our fate would have been a foregone conclusion.

The sun shone fiercely down and the shadows of the trees and overhanging rocks stood out black as jet. There was a great stillness everywhere; only some irrepressible and garrulous grasshopper raised at intervals a spasmodic din, and, failing to find support, subsided into resentful silence again. This waiting for hostilities to begin was, as is usual in such cases, even more trying than the actual combat. Then we heard the stentorian voice of Sir Donald, who had been looking through his field-glasses, sing out:

"Now then, all, here they come. Don't fire a shot until I give the order. We can't afford to throw away powder against such odds."

In all truth, what we saw was terrifying enough. Up the inclined plane they came—singly, by twos, and threes, and in scattered groups. Some affected cover behind the high boulders and tree-trunks, while a black mass of human beings pushed on quickly up the dry bed of the watercourse. It was a confused vision of glistening ebony limbs, shaggy mops of hair, and quivering spears. If any white men were with them, they were lost sight of amid that ever-changing host.

"The confounded fools!" I heard Sir Donald say. "It seems a pity to take advantage of their ignorance. Snowball, tell them to stop and jabber a little."

Snowball bawled to them at the top of his voice, but it was of no use. In another moment spears were fixed in womeras, or throwing sticks, and our coloured driver of the spare horses was obliged to duck his head, while a veritable shower of whirring and dangerous missiles rattled on the rocks in his immediate neighbourhood with a decidedly nerve-upsetting din. Sir Donald had incautiously lifted his head a little too high the better to observe the situation of affairs, when *bang, zip*, and a bullet, glancing off a rock, sent his high-crowned hat spinning into the air. The mutineers were with the blacks after all, and doubtless urging them on. There was only one course to be pursued.

"Now then," cried Sir Donald, "each one his man and shoot straight!"

Pom, pom, pom, pom, pom—pom—pom! The Colt's gun had gone mad, and a stream of lead fairly hailed upon the mass of black humanity struggling up the watercourse, paving it with dead and dying.

Bang, bang, bang, tick—tock, tick—tock! and the Martini Henris and Parker's Mauser, which he had managed to smuggle under his master's nose all the way from the Tugela, bellowed and rat-tatted an accompaniment to the Colt. Could flesh and blood stand up against such a hail of death?

Pom, pom, pom—pom, pom—pom, pom! The quick-firing gun mowed them down like grass before the sickle. Would nothing stop them!

On they came, hardly wotting of the unseen thing that spirted flame and lead at them. They were up to the breastwork now—they had struggled up and over a pathway of dying and dead, right in the teeth of the blood-red flash and ghoulish bark of rifle and Colt's gun.

Each man stood to his post ready and determined. I saw Sir Donald, his face grimed and scorched, working the gun with a masterful celerity that even then compelled my admiration. Still, he did not like the work. It was only dire necessity that made him fight those infatuated savages. He told me afterwards that such work sickened him of soldiering. But it was forced upon him, and had to be done.

Smartly serving the gun, and barefooted and bare-headed, Parker waited on his master. He skipped about nimbly, and there was a light in his eyes plainly denoting that if the look-out were blue, he at least was in his proper element.

Maitland was another revelation; he had boldly pushed forward, and, with a smartness that surprised me, was literally pumping the lead into the advancing enemy. Once I saw a huge black, who had somehow crept up undetected, and was actually past our line, turn on him with a great jagged club raised high above his head. The tutor had fired the last cartridge in his magazine, but he promptly clubbed his rifle, and, so as not to break the stock, drove the butt right into the left side of his assailant's face. The burly savage went down all of a heap. Thus will men fight when at bay!

As for Madge, I had observed her once as, coming right up to the breastwork, she joined the ranks of the defenders, and used her repeating rifle with a coolness and dexterity that surprised me. I had now lost sight of her, and somehow a prescience of impending danger possessed me. We were still keeping the

EACH MAN STOOD TO HIS POST READY AND DETERMINED.

attackers at bay, and I could safely look around for her. She was not anywhere in the firing-line. I ran round to where the waggons were, and there on the edge of the cliff I saw something that turned my blood cold.

Some of the enemy had actually scaled it, and were being actively engaged by Martin and Bailey. The traitor Bird, who must have known of this weak spot, was struggling with Madge. He had succeeded in catching her rifle and was wrenching it from her grasp. They were swaying on the very edge of the cliff. I ran swiftly up to them.

"Let go your rifle, Madge," I cried. "Let it go!"

She did so, and Bird, suddenly released, spun sideways for a yard or two. Madge stepped backwards. Quick as thought, Bird threw her rifle from him and, clubbing his own heavier one, swung it upwards to bring it down on my head.

"Too late, Bird!" I cried, dealing him a blow on the chest that sent him reeling backwards over the cliff.

I sprang to the brink, and, with Madge's help, loosened a huge boulder and sent it crashing down on top of the invaders. That settled the business so far as the contingent was concerned. I left Madge on the brink and ran round to the front again.

It was a hand to hand fight now, and a few minutes more would decide our fate. The advancing tide of human beings was bearing us surely backwards, and away from our only shelter. What chance had we against such a host!

"Where is Madge?" shouted Sir Donald, as he caught sight of me. "Send her to me at once."

His voice sounded like the death-knell of our hopes. I knew what he meant and dared not answer him. That certainly was the most terrible moment of my life.

And then something occurred that even now sends the blood pulsing through my veins with the very thought of it. Far down, near the base of the cliff, we heard the sharp crackle of a repeating rifle. Nearer and nearer it came. It was like a new lease of life to us, and with broken cheers we made a desperate rally and recovered

our lost ground. It was the psychological moment of the fight, and we knew that everything depended on it. It was a desperate game of bluff, and it imposed on the enemy. The attackers wavered and began to draw back. *Crack, crack, crack*, and the savages, unable to account for this new mysterious force behind them, and fearing to be hemmed in, lost heart. Some of them became panic-stricken, threw down their weapons, and fairly bolted. And this when victory had been well within their grasp!

"Hooray!" cried Parker, jumping over the breastwork and making straight for a gigantic savage, whom he promptly bowled over with his fists. He had flung his rifle from him—it had jammed—and, being fleet of foot, he started in to make the most of vanishing opportunities.

"Hold on, men," cried Sir Donald; "keep together and don't go farther than the foot of the kopje. I wonder what relief party that is!"

"There's only one man," cried Madge, "*and it's Smith*—a party in himself!—I'm sure it's Smith!—Hurrah!"

As we caught sight of that tall, gaunt, ragged figure with an old battered helmet on his head, standing out fearlessly and alone near the foot of the ascent, punishing the savages with methodical and dire effect, we had no doubt as to his identity.

We had come thousands of miles to find him, and now he had unexpectedly turned up and found *us*, and just when we most wanted finding!

In a body we ran down the slope, firing upon the now thoroughly demoralised enemy. The savages made straight for the entrance to the valley.

And then, from among the fleeing blacks, we saw a white man, Sam Holt, detach himself, and, raising his rifle, aim point-blank at our deliverer. Next moment we had levelled our rifles at him, but we were too late.

"Don't fire!" cried Sir Donald. "You'll shoot them both."

Our apprehensions were short-lived, for just at that moment a burly savage, speeding swiftly in one direction and looking in another, ran full tilt into the traitor. The impact reminded one of the meeting of two express trains, and Holt had the thinner skull. He never rose again. And then as Crocodile—for he was the savage—doubtless feeling dazed, recovered himself, Parker was right in alongside him. The recognition was mutual. Crocodile gave him a quick look of hate and fear from under lowering brows. He remembered one occasion when, after meeting with fistic punishment from this man, he had thrown a stick at his head with such force that the white fellow must have seen more stars than there were in the heavens. And then it was his—Crocodile's—turn when he caught him napping beside the prostrate form of Hawker and, as he thought, finished him. But now, here surely was the ghost of the irrepressible white man who had such a curious weakness for fighting with his hands! He had never tackled a ghost, but he would try.

With courage that was beyond question, and promptitude indeed admirable, he stopped and picked up a goodly sized stone. Had the man-servant not ducked, he would beyond doubt, have been a ghost in another minute. Parker rushed in upon him. *Click*, and Crocodile probably never knew what happened, for the blow right under the jaw sent him spinning backwards; his heels caught on an outcrop of rock, and he shot head-foremost over the bank of the dry creek. He landed on the back of his head on the stony bottom some fifteen feet or so lower down. And that was the end of the dangerous savage who tried to run with the hares and hunt with the hounds.

The blacks had fled helter-skelter through the gorge. So as Sir Donald, and indeed all of us, considered that they had paid dearly enough for their aggressiveness, and that it was exceedingly unlikely they would rally, we turned our attention to the strange man of whose odd, elusive ways we had heard such queer stories that, at times, we were almost inclined to place him outside the human pale.

He stood, a gaunt, eccentric-looking figure, silently regarding us, with the butt of his rifle resting on the ground between his feet, which were wide apart, while his two hands grasped the muzzle. It was a strange idea, but he gave me the impression of one who, despite his assumption of *sang-froid*, was in reality so shy that he would have bolted from our presence even then could he have done so.

He had undoubtedly a good face. His naturally fair complexion was darkened by sun and weather. There was a curious admixture of alertness and thoughtfulness in his blue eyes which denoted a life accustomed to ceaseless watchfulness, and to over-much communion with its own thoughts. He suggested a modernised Don Quixote, wearing a battered old pith helmet instead of a metal one. In place of a coat of mail, a ragged and faded blue print shirt covered his spare body. The sleeves had been torn off at the elbows, probably for the sake of convenience. A pair of muddy

HE STOOD SILENTLY REGARDING US.

brown moleskin trousers, secured by a heavy cartridge belt, covered the lower part of his body, while hobnailed boots in the last stages of dissolution, only held together by a clumsy but ingenious arrangement of string and green hide, encased his feet. A bandolier full of cartridges was slung over one shoulder, while a capacious leather bag, that bulged in a mysterious and extraordinary manner, hung from the other side. When we afterwards discovered that this bag contained his entire wardrobe and commissariat, we ceased to wonder.

We approached him, and I think it was a sense of the great significance of this meeting that kept us strangely silent.

As for Smith, his self-repression and seeming coolness under the circumstances were extraordinary. Parker, who happened to be nearest him, was the first to speak.

"Good-morning, sir!" he said and touched his hat. Then, staring harder, and like one who could not believe the evidence of his own senses, the man-servant brought his heels together, sprang to attention and saluted. His thoughts were beyond speech.

"Good-morning!" said the gaunt stranger, eyeing Parker critically and acknowledging the salute. Then, as Sir Donald and I came up, he addressed himself to us.

"Glad to see you, gentlemen," he said. "Sorry you've had some unpleasantness with my neighbours. Can't understand it; I've lived here for several months and they've always given me a wide berth——"

"Smith!" interrupted Sir Donald, rushing up to him. "Don't you know me, Smith? Goodness, man, I've been searching the wide world for you!"

And Sir Donald, obviously brimful of emotion, seized him by both hands.

"Bless my heart, the dear old General!" cried the ragged one, and the recognition was complete.

Sir Donald introduced him to Madge, and the courtly sweep that battered old helmet described would have thrilled Cervantes and fascinated Doré. Then in turn we men-folk were taken up and formally presented to him.

"I'm sorry, gentlemen, that having been from home these last few days," said Mr. Smith comprehensively and apologetically, "my larder

isn't such that I can offer you—er—the sort of hospitality I'd like to, but——"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Sir Donald at this point. "You're our guest now, Smith! You always were an extravagant sort of chap, I can remember. You'd spend no end of money in entertaining all sorts of people, and you never seemed to care a rap about what you ate or wore yourself."

Those of us who could blushed at this outspoken indictment as we noted the extreme shabbiness of the human scarecrow before us. But Smith did not seem to mind in the least.

"When you've got no money," he said reflectively, and with a return of that far-away look in his eyes, "then, you want to look as if you had some. But if you've got lots, I don't see that it matters a penny what you look like, because you've got it, you know."

From which sage remark we gathered that Mr. Smith had not always valued money as he ought to have done, with the result that when he wanted it he had formed a correct estimate of the value of appearances. But now, his speech suggested that he considered himself a millionaire.

Before he went back to camp with us he took us to the partially bared, well-defined reef we had examined a day or two before, and which showed such remarkable prospects. Smith told us we could all peg out claims on it. He himself would take up a Prospector's Claim. There was more than enough for all.

Our casualties in the great fight were remarkably slight. Some bandages worn for the next few weeks during our leisurely march back to civilisation, and the exhaustion of my entire stock of sticking-plaster—monopolised largely by Parker—was fortunately all that had to be drawn on from the medical stores.

We left the valley that very same afternoon, and Smith accompanied us. Before doing so, it was only with the greatest difficulty that Sir Donald induced that gentleman to don a spare suit of his own in place of the rags he wore. It was only when the plea of decency was urged that he capitulated. Before leaving the valley, we all formally staked out claims on Smith's line of reef. It is now one of the richest gold-mines in the Northern Territory of South Australia, and every one of our party has a banking account such as he or she never dreamed of having.

The evil-doers had come to the unregretted end of all such short-sighted mortals—all save Brock of gastronomic aspirations, and as he fled with the cannibals, it is more than likely that, when they had leisure to turn their attention to him, his punishment fitted his crimes.

When Jack, on his return to England, passed his exams. with flying colours, Maitland, the one-time agnostic, entered the Church and is now a power for good in Christendom. For, when face to face with Nature in the wilderness, he had been impressed with one great truth—that law and order, and not caprice, must be the attribute of the supremest intelligence; that all the wealth and beauty of Nature is but a voice, a revealment and an appeal of the Beneficent and Eternal Being to man.

As for Madge—can any one guess?

THE END.

A NEW SERIAL ENTITLED

THE FATAL LIST

A Story of the French Revolution.

By HERBERT HAYENS,

AUTHOR OF "MY SWORD FOR FORTUNE,"

WILL COMMENCE NEXT MONTH.

SCHOOL ESSAY SOCIETIES.

By O. C. WILLIAMS.

MANY of the remarks which I made upon debating societies do not apply to essay societies. The constitution of essay societies is of a different nature, the procedure more simple, and the qualities called into play in writing essays are as a rule higher than those required for debating. In the first place, I advise those who wish to found an essay society to approach some master and get his help and his interest: his presence cannot produce the same feeling of diffidence as in a debating society, for the reader of the essay has only to deliver the words which he has written with confidence in his own study, while a master who is interested will be a very good guard against slackness and dissolution, symptoms of which appear much more quickly in societies where strenuous efforts are needed. Again, it is almost impossible for a single House to produce enough boys with sufficient reading and ability in composition to be efficient members of an essay society. None but those in their two last years can hope to have acquired the necessary knowledge, and even in their last two years there are many sadly incompetent to undertake a composition of any value. Though most admirable essays are often read before school societies, those who wish to found a society will find that there will never be more than just enough members of the school worthy to join its ranks, and that some of these are unwilling to give the time and trouble. Much depends on the original members of a society, and the founders should put away all prejudice and personal feelings in order to get members who will be industrious and not drop away after the first enthusiasm has died down. Specialists in science and mathematics, unless they are also fond of literature, should be admitted very sparingly, as a man who has read neither classics, nor history, nor modern literature, is useless. With all respect to modern "sides," there is no comparison between their essays and those produced by a classical side, a point on which most headmasters agree. A brilliant man, if very lazy, should only be asked to join if his fellows think they can keep him up to the mark, for the seeds of slackness spread with incredible quickness in an essay society. When the society is formed it is advisable in case of emergencies to elect officers, but they will have very little to do. The subjects for essays are, of course, unlimited; yet it will be found that literary subjects are most popular, for it is very seldom that the schoolboy has enough special knowledge to write on other subjects. Every one, however, in his leisure reading should have acquired some knowledge of and ideas on English, or even on Latin and Greek, literature. Essays on foreign authors are seldom successful if the author cannot be quoted in his original language, and such quotation is useless unless all the members are acquainted with that tongue. It is usually the case that there are very few good linguists in a public school, and that the average boy has only a small knowledge of French. The exception, therefore, though he is to be pitied, had better defer writing on Dante, or Heine, or Victor Hugo, till he goes to the University. In writing a literary essay, that is, an essay on some particular author or book, one of two styles may be taken—descriptive or critical. If the reader of the essay is introducing a work which is new, as he thinks, to the society, elaborate criticism is clearly out of place: whereas, a description not too detailed, with plenty of well-chosen quotations, will arouse great interest, and lead the hearers to read the work for themselves. On the other hand, if some very familiar subject is taken, such as Dickens' works, the reverse is the case; for everybody will have read Dickens, but very few will have ever thought of his style and method in a critical spirit. For one who is writing on an author, it is not sufficient to have read one of his works; points which are only faintly brought out in one work often appear strikingly in another; and an opinion formed of an author from one of his works is nearly always unsound. In forming his opinion, the writer of the essay should do his best to think for himself, and, when he has come to definite conclusions, should endeavour to compare them with those held by well-known critics. If he finds his own views divergent, there is no reason why he should immediately give them up. If on reflection, after reading the opinion of a well-known critic, he still prefers his own, by all means let him stick to it, and in his paper try to bring out the reasons which led him to

differ. Thus the writer on "Robert Louis Stevenson" should read the criticisms of Sir Leslie Stephen and Professor Saintsbury, but if after doing so he still prefers that author's essays to his novels, well and good. Every opinion if supported by a sound argument is worth hearing. Though quotations from the work or works forming the subject of the essay are admissible and necessary, care must be taken not to copy from other books. If much information has to be supplied from other sources, let the would-be essayist digest this in his own mind, assisting his memory with short notes on paper, and then reproduce all that is necessary *in his own words*. In writing of an author, do not start off with an elaborate biography with anecdotes, unless they are necessary to the idea you wish to develop, or influenced the author's own writings. It seems to be the stock way of beginning such an essay to introduce the subject in a little preface, and then to launch forth into the interesting fact that "William Makepeace Thackeray was born on —— at ——," with many other family details, which are useless and distracting to the audience, who, if reduced to apathy at the outset, will remain apathetic during the whole essay.

The reading of an essay is not so easy a thing as it may appear at first. The reader must know it well himself, and must, above all, be able to read his own writing. The common faults are reading too fast and reading in too low tones. The brain of the listener must always catch the connection rather slowly, and so a pace which appears absurd to the reader is usually just right for the listeners. Let the reader sit well up, and pitch his tones rather higher than those of ordinary conversation. An essay society among its other excellences includes this, that it provides a field in which those unfortunate beings afflicted with stammering can show their talents, for they can always get a friend to read their essays for them. Lastly, as to the discussion following the essay. It is best to allow it to become general: there is never so very much to say, and if there is to be only one speaker at a time, the odds are that nobody will say anything. Even at the University, where formal discussions are necessary and often good, there is a depressing and Quakerlike silence for several minutes after the subject is open to discussion, till some bold spirit is "moved" to speak. But if the discussion becomes more a conversation, of which the reader is the centre, people are more ready to state their views and objections in a friendly manner, and to ask questions. If the discussion drifts right away from the essay, no harm is done, for at school boys have very few opportunities for discussing with one another their views on literary subjects.

Here my few hints must come to a close. I think that both debating and essay societies are necessary in a school, and that it is quite possible for them to flourish "like the green bay-tree." And even if the speeches produced do not rival John Bright's, or the essays cast Macaulay's into the shade, yet the benefit to the actual speaker or author will be more than he would get from reading the whole of either great man's works.

HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY.

BY HEDLEY V. FIELDING.

OF the many important points to be considered in essay-writing, there are two which take precedence of all others, and they are:

(1) The subject-matter, and

(2) The mode of expressing that matter.

Thus we know that to write an essay well one must for a start have a fairly complete and connected idea of the subject to be introduced; while to present that matter in a pleasant and readable manner, or, in other words, to write with *style*, one must pay attention to form and mode.

Prose has been defined as "Good words in the best order," poetry as "The best words in the best order." A good author when writing prose usually selects those words which are most expressive while at the same time most readily understood; while if he were writing poetry on the same subject he would probably employ words and expressions altogether different.

It is a common mistake amongst novices in the art of essay-writing to suppose that the oftener long, obscure words, Latin or Greek quotations, figures of speech, and so on, are employed, the "finer" the composition. This is quite wrong. Turn to any of Macaulay's essays and you will be struck at once by the dignified simplicity of the writing. Invariably is an argument worded clearly, simply, definitely, and in short, sharp sentences containing nothing but what is to the point, and composed of words calculated to convey most readily the meaning intended.

Of course, we cannot all be Macaulays; but we can greatly improve our style by closely observing his and that of equally notable writers, by being careful to avoid using "flowery"—which are invariably weak—sentences, and by *not* imitating the great Dr. Johnson (who, however, was a genius and, therefore, not subject to ordinary rules!) who, content to use Saxon words at once pure and forcible in conversation, generally resorted, with a pen in his hand, to those long Latin forms which his soul loved.

Finally, note the following summary of the chief points to be observed in essay-writing:

(1) Never use words or phrases of which you do not perfectly understand the meaning.

(2) Don't use *unnecessary* words.

(3) Avoid "fine" writing and literary affectation in general.

(4) Don't "knock off" an essay. Only geniuses can afford to do that, and not always they. Unless the subject is of immediate interest only, put your work by for a time, and later look at it again, when you will be surprised how you can improve it.

(5) Keep to the point, and express yourself throughout as briefly as is compatible with clearness and freedom from abruptness.

If these hints are followed, and your subject is of sufficient interest, you will not have long to wait before it will be *your* turn to be accepted and to "glow in print."

A DINNER GONG IN THE STONE AGE.

Drawn by F. R. Batters.

By T. S. GURR.

No. 6.—AS THE DAWN BROKE.

Illustrated by GEORGE SOPER.

ASHCROFT, Bell, and MacGregor sprawled lazily in "long sleevers" on the verandah of the Chotapur Club. A box of cigars was close at hand, and a Surthi waiter, in spotless white attire with Turkey red cummerbund, hung around to dispense drinks. The conversation was sprightly enough, but all three wore the serious expression of men discussing the occult and mysterious. Bell had directed the talk to this channel by recounting some extraordinary conjuring tricks he had lately seen, and then the horrors multiplied. Tales of murders, robberies, deeds of violence, and sudden disappearances, witchcraft, superstition and hypnotism, cropped up for recital and discussion, until their nerves were tightened up to snapping-point.

The club-house was situated about half a mile from the station. It was an unpretentious building of three rooms, with a broad verandah around three of its sides. There was nothing particularly inviting about it except its "exclusiveness." The bungalow itself was set back in a garden overgrown with crotons, roses, and show-flower shrubs, and hedged round with tall, impenetrable prickly pear cactus. Several large trees added a further gloomy aspect to a miniature wilderness. In the heat of the day, however, the garden was cool and teemed with that small life which seeks covert in tangled growth and leafy umbrage. Lizards crept out on to the path and disported themselves—sometimes a snake wriggled across—and when the silence was deepest the shy mongoose gambolled about in the sheer joy of inviting detection.

Just before dark, the outlook from the verandah was particularly sombre and depressing, and was calculated to make the most cheerful spirit cast about for a subject of conversation in keeping with the surroundings. On this particular evening a peculiar stillness and stuffiness, pregnant with alarming possibilities, intensified that disposition. The sun had set in a sky that glowed like a furnace; all day the heat had been terrific, and the earth cracked like a parched and fevered tongue. The short twilight was tinged with a sickly jaundiced hue, and the air clouded with myriads of fluttering insects attracted by the strange light. Then a little speck of vapour came up from the horizon on the south-west. At its appearance, the cattle were driven in, and men, women, and children huddled themselves under the eaves of their huts. The monsoon was about to break, and the indications were that it would burst with a terrific storm.

"Something is coming to a head," Ashcroft interjected in the course of a dramatic narrative of a sensational murder in the Berars, which he had just returned from investigating. Bell and MacGregor, almost electrified with horror, were listening intently, when the latter suddenly started up. "Look!" he exclaimed. "Who is that?"

A dark figure half emerged from the shadow of the verandah entrance and curtly salaamed. Ashcroft did not move a muscle, or change the expression of his features. "Don't betray yourselves by a movement," he drawled monotonously, looking straight before him. "Who is it?" he inquired in Mahratti, without so much as glancing at the intruder.

"Some one who wishes to speak to Ashcroft sahib," came the reply in a low tone.

"Come round to the side of the house, and I will let you in." Ashcroft rose and leisurely left the verandah. He had hardly passed through the door of the reading-room when a loud peal of thunder crashed in the heavens and reverberated in rolling echoes amongst the adjacent hills. A sudden gale of wind extinguished the verandah lamp, and heavy drops of rain began to smite the leaves outside. Ashcroft turned. "Come inside, both of you," he said. "I warrant you'll hear something interesting to-night."

A tall man, closely muffled, stealthily slid in when the side door was opened. He appeared disconcerted at his large audience and, for the space of a minute, did not speak. Then, looking at Ashcroft, he asked, "Could I see you alone?"

"These sahibs are my friends. Speak if you have aught to say. It is safe," Ashcroft replied.

"The matter is urgent," the man exclaimed, throwing off his cloak and squatting in a corner with his back against the wall, "otherwise, I should not be here on this wild night. How it thunders and rains! The rivers will be in flood before day breaks." His eyes searched the features of his auditors successively. "Where is Mr. Cummings?" he inquired in excellent English, a smile lighting up his fine intellectual face, that, with its fair skin and high, smooth forehead, proclaimed him to be a Brahmin of the sacerdotal class.

"In England," Bell replied. "Did you know him?"

"I was his head clerk for about six months. My name is Bulwant Rao, and I worked on the railway for thirty years. When my father died he left me considerable property at Pimpri, the village across the river, about ten miles from here. You know it?"

Bell nodded, "Who does not?"

The Brahmin continued: "It is a noted place, for it contains the shrine of the terrible god, Muth. My father was an attendant at this temple, and at his death I took his place. You white sahibs do not believe in our gods. Nevertheless, Muth was a god to be feared—a god of punishment and vengeance, and when he was on earth, pestilence and famine stalked through the land. A thousand years ago the cave temple of Pimpri was excavated for him, and in it he has dwelt ever since, placated by constant priestly service and votive offerings. Tradition has it that whenever Muth has been wroth, he has spoken in a voice like to the thunder outside, and then all within hearing fell stricken with pains and disease. His voice, however, has not been heard within the memory of living man, for never were his worshippers more devoted than those of the present generation. But within the last two months misfortune has befallen the sacred temple; untoward events have happened, and we fear that Muth is justly angered. There is a grave danger overshadowing the temple—his idol has been threatened with desecration and violence, and we fear, unless we can circumvent our foes, that his awful voice will again be heard. Therefore, for our own sakes, for your sakes, for the sake of our little ones, I have travelled many miles to speak to thee, Ashcroft sahib, to-day."

He paused. A terrific thunderclap seemed to rend the heavens, the wind increased in fury, and the rain fell in a perfect deluge. The Brahmin raised his voice to a shout and proceeded. "The temple of Muth stands about sixty feet above the river which it overlooks, and has been carved out of the solid rock. From the back of the village a flight of two hundred steps leads up to the entrance, and this is the only approach. A steep stairway has also been cut in the face of the rocky bank down to the water's edge, and is used by the priests only, to reach the ghāt for their daily ablutions. Directly in front of the cave mouth there grows a huge banyan-tree, under which the temple devotees are wont to sit in the daytime. The cave itself contains two rooms. The first, a fairly large one containing the idols of various deities, is used daily by a large crowd of worshippers. The second, a much smaller one, immediately behind, contains the image of Muth, and is reached by means of a narrow alley way opening into the left side of the main room. After midnight no one remains in the temple but a single priest whose duty it is to keep guard and replenish the oil in the small buttee which constantly burns before the shrine of Muth. The image, I must tell you, is a large stone one. The eyes are fierce and glow like hot coals. The mouth is closed, except when an offering of precious coin or jewellery is made, and then the god protrudes his tongue, upon which the offering must be placed. If it is acceptable, the god swallows it—a sign of forgiveness and favour. If it is rejected, the tongue does not return to the mouth, and the priest piously removes the offering and casts it back to him who placed it there. This reluctance of the god is a sign of wrath, and woe comes to him who meets with such disfavour. Humbler gifts such as grain,

sweetmeats or cocoanut are usually placed at the base of the image.

"Exactly two months ago, about an hour after midnight, two men entered the holy temple and, accosting the priest, declared they wished to make an offering to Muth. One was a tall man dressed like a well-to-do village patel, the other was a mere coolie who carried a small jute bag. The priest remonstrated because of the lateness of the hour, but the patel would not be denied. 'I am journeying to the coast,' he said, 'and must leave Pimpri within an hour. Reports speak of the presence of robbers and dacoits, and I dare not travel with the treasure I possess in the daytime. Take my oblations or leave them.'

"The priest consented and led the way to the inner shrine. He trimmed the buttee while the patel opened the bag. The priest took the first gift, a gold mohur, and prayed to the god. Immediately the tongue of Muth protruded. As soon as the gold was placed on it, the mouth closed with a snap.

"The patel laughed loud and impiously. 'The god is hungry,' he said, 'but I have within this bag more than will appease his appetite,' and he placed a fine gold-studded bangle on the tongue of the god when it shot out again.

"IMMEDIATELY THE TONGUE OF MUTH PROTRUDED."

"'Laugh not,' the priest said warningly, 'lest the god destroy thee, thou most sinful man! The god is hungry because thy sins are great—great sins require great sacrifices. From the hands of the devout the god requires but little!'

"'I am truly a sinful man,' the patel replied, 'but in Khandeish, whence I hail, I have many rice-fields, and gold can expiate all sins.' And he handed the bag to the priest.

"'Feed him,' he said; 'my hand is unworthy, maybe.' One by one the priest placed the gifts on the tongue of Muth—bangles, nose rings, anklets, bracelets, finger rings, many of them set with precious gems, disappeared into the interior of the god. The bag at last was quite empty, but Muth's tongue still lolled greedily out. It was a serious portent. The god was not satisfied, and could not grant complete forgiveness. But the patel only laughed louder than before, and with a jest or two took his leave. He was a strange, a very strange, daring and godless man.'

"The very next day, an old friend of mine, Vinayak Deo, a Brahmin of great piety and exalted character, paid the temple a visit. Vinayak periodically made a pilgrimage to Pimpri, and his presence in the temple invariably increased the number of worshippers. It was known to all that Vinayak possessed more than ordinary wisdom and could see beyond the scope of human eye. When he saw the image of Muth his features shrank with fear, and he exclaimed, 'Woe to us all—the god's face is soured.'

"'We have been constant in our duties,' I said.

"He closed his eyes for a minute or two and then, opening them again, spoke thus: 'I see with the eye of vision. The god's face is soured—it is soured because his stomach is soured. Last night he was made an offering. The gifts were gold, jewellery, and precious stones. The man who gave them was a robber, a murderer, and his oblations were illgotten

"IT WAS VINAYAK-DEO!"

They are as bitter gall within the belly of Muth. Woe, woe, to the temple of Muth! and Vinayak beat his breast in a mad frenzy at these words, finally falling senseless to the ground. We carried him outside, and placed him under the banyan-tree. In about half an hour he revived, when without so much as a word he rose and slowly departed."

The Brahmin paused for breath. Bell and MacGregor, with starting eyes, sighed audibly. There was a strange expression in Ashcroft's face, and a self-satisfied smile lurked about his tightly closed lips. Outside, the elements joined in a fierce chorus.

"Now," continued the Brahmin, "I come to the most dreadful stage of my story. "I did not see Vinayak Deo again when I returned to the village, and on making inquiries I learned he had crossed the river for Chotapur. Early the following morning, as is my wont, I proceeded to the temple so as to complete my devotions before the villagers arrived to commence theirs. To my horror, I found the priest, who had remained on watch during the night, stretched prone on the topmost step. He was dead, and his body was already stiff. There was a dark mark round his throat, and I knew he had been strangled. Sick with dread, I entered the temple, and, lighting an oil-lamp, walked round to the shrine of the god Muth. The eye of the god glared fiercely at me, and I thought his lips trembled. I searched about for the cause of his displeasure. The figure of a man, doubled up as if in agony, lay at the foot of the god. The skull was bashed in, as if with one terrific blow; a large iron hammer, such as is used for breaking stones, with the haft broken, was within a span of his outstretched arm. I stooped and looked into the face of the corpse—it was Vinayak Deo!

"How he came by his death it is not for me to say. He was a holy man, but people have said he was an avaricious one. What think you, Ashcroft sahib? Did he, think you, go mad with greed, and stealthily return to the temple to plunder the god? Was it he who strangled the attendant priest? Did the god Muth, in his anger and displeasure, deal him that fatal blow?"

Ashcroft disregarded these questions. "What became of the body?" he asked severely.

The Brahmin's face paled and his lips trembled. "Be not angry, O great Presence. I must confess all, else thou wilt refuse to help me in my greater need. I was too horrified, too stricken with grief, to give proper instructions. I did not think of the Sirkar's rule. The bodies should have been left untouched, and the matter reported to the police. The neglect is mine. The other priests were afraid and acted secretly. Both bodies were burned at nightfall. Had the villagers known the truth, they would have deserted the desecrated temple, and then Muth, deprived of his worshippers, would have lifted his voice in anger, and all of us together would have been destroyed."

Ashcroft eyed the speaker curiously. "There is more to be told," he said. "Continue."

"I obey, most wise One," said Bulwant Ras. "Yesterday evening a stranger visited the temple. He crawled up the steps on his

hands and knees, very slowly, like a dying beast. His body was covered with loathsome sores, and his frame was terribly emaciated. He asked to be allowed to worship the god Muth, and I, knowing his end was very near, led him into the inner shrine. The face of the god was frightful to look upon as this man made his obeisance. I knew the god was angry, and the grovelling wretch knew it too. Raising himself to his knees, he cried out in a very loud and bitter voice, 'O great god Muth, hear me! Lift thy curse from off me. Thou hast racked my limbs with unspeakable pain. My end is near, but have mercy, Great One, and trouble not my spirit when I lay this weary body down. Hear me! It was I who was in attendance on that wicked man who gorged thee with the fruits of plunder and crime. For this sin thou hast amply punished me. I will do thee a service if thou wilt remove thy curse. Thou art in danger—in danger of desecration and violence. Two hours after midnight, on the sixth day after the moon is full—' The man's voice broke, and a deep gurgle came from his throat as he fell face forward at the foot of Muth. We rushed to raise him up, but he was dead."

The Brahmin glanced at each of his audience in turn. "That is all," he said. "To-night is the sixth day after the full moon. It wants three hours for midnight. In five hours from now the holy temple of Muth will be attacked. This is as certain as the rest of my story is true. Ashcroft sahib, wilt thou help us? We fear not for Muth, for who can prevail against a god? But we tremble lest his voice awaken the mountain echoes with his wrath. Then we all will die, even as that wretched coolie who carried the patel's bag of loot, died, in torment of body and spirit. The night is a wild one. There will be much water in the paddy-fields, and travelling will be hard and dangerous. But the white man cares not for discomfort, and he revels in the fierce joy of battle. Wilt thou come?"

"I will come," said Ashcroft simply.

Belwant Rao rose. "I will wait on the verandah," he said, "till thou art ready."

"I would like to accompany you, Ashcroft," MacGregor said, "if you've no objection. I think Bell will come too."

"Delighted to have both of you," Ashcroft replied. "We'll have supper first, though. There is time. I must send round for a squad of police. We can wait till they arrive."

"I can't make much out of the man's story," Bell exclaimed. "It is a case that will tax all the 'nous' you possess, Ashcroft, to piece together."

"There is nothing in it that mystifies me," said Ashcroft, lowering his voice and bending forward in his chair. "Vinayak Deo being implicated has made everything plain. I think I have spoken to you before of that infamous old wretch. No man deserved the hangman's rope more than he. He had been associated with Tantia Bheel for years, but latterly turned traitor, and by his cunning handed Tantia over to my custody—for a short time. The circumstances of the case are these. Vinayak Deo was robbed of his ill-gotten treasures whilst attempting to reach Chotápur to escape the vengeance of the dacoits he had quarrelled with and betrayed. The village patel who made the offering to that harmless idol Muth, was Tantia himself—the coolie who accompanied him was one of his trusted followers! It might have been mere caprice that made Tantia dispose of the stolen articles as described. It may be said that Fielding's being close on his heels forced Tantia to select Muth as the best receptacle of the booty for a time. How Vinayak Deo escaped death at Tantia's hand it is difficult to conceive; how he discovered where his property had been hidden is equally hard to understand. Vinayak Deo was, however, a man, of preternatural cunning. His holiness was only a cloak at all times, and his solicitude for the god but a device to recover what he had lost. He was determined to regain possession of his treasures at any price. There can be no doubt that Vinayak Deo strangled the temple priest and that the hammer found beside his corpse was his, taken there for the purpose of smashing the stone idol of Muth. I believe Vinayak was surprised in the cell, just as he was about to commence his impious task, by some one who was bent on a similar errand. Vinayak Deo was slain not by the god Muth, but by Tantia Bheel! To-night Tantia is returning to the temple, and unless we forestall him it will be safe to assert that all that is left of Muth in the morning will be an undignified heap of rubble!"

"You are marvellous," Bell cried admiringly. "I never once thought of that clever dacoit chief. We are in for an exciting time. What would Cummings not give to be here!"

The club boy entered with a telegraph message in his hand, addressed to Ashcroft. It was in cipher, but Ashcroft read it aloud: "*Guard the Chotapur bank of the Pimpri River opposite the temple shortly after midnight. Tantia worships there between twelve and two.*—Fielding."

Midnight, the rain pouring in torrents, and

the lightning, in vivid flashes, illuminating the sodden landscape. The paddy-fields lay under a sheet of water, and every little runnel and gully foamed and eddied, brimful in its course, to Pimpri River, now in full flood. The mountain behind the village, swathed to the summit in dense masses of cloud, rumbled in echo to deep thunder crashes. It was an awesome night. Under a mango-tree almost opposite to the cave temple, Ashcroft, MacGregor, and Bell, drenched to the skin despite their waterproof overcoats and leggings, kept their weary vigil. The shivering native sepoys, properly posted under less favourable conditions, cursed Tantia Bheel and all outlawry.

One o'clock, and no sign. Two o'clock, the position unchanged. Three o'clock, the wind calmer and the rain less violent, but not a sound from the temple. Had the dacoits abandoned their raid, deterred by the inclement weather, or had Fielding and Ashcroft both been gulled by false reports, leaving Tantia a free hand elsewhere? By four o'clock the rain had entirely ceased, and the clouds lifting slightly, showed a small expanse of black starry sky. Five o'clock, everything perfectly still and a leaden gleam of dawn coming up in the sky. Half-past five, the clouds gathering for another fierce outburst, and the temple across the river showing blurred and indistinct in the sombre light. Ashcroft rose from his damp seat on a gnarled exposed root and yawned.

"I'm going to cross the river, Bell," he said impatiently. "No good stooping here. The monsoon has upset Tantia's plans, and he has probably spent a far happier night than we have. We'll take the ferry across."

Bell looked at the little punt tossing on the seething flood and jerking at the frail painter by which it was attached to the wire rope stretched from bank to bank.

"Is it safe to haul ourselves across by that?" he said nervously.

"Oh, it's right enough," Ashcroft answered, leaping into the punt. Bell followed, and the water gushed over the side as the punt rocked. The deep silence after the turmoil of the night was only broken by the swirl and swish of the swiftly running river.

"I'll stay behind," MacGregor shouted; "the punt will only hold two. Bulwant Ras and I will follow later.

"Be careful, sahibs," Bulwant exclaimed timorously. "Shiva! what's that!"

A fearful yell, loud, prolonged and barbaric, went up from the temple beyond and rumbled in harsh echo amongst the beetling heights above. The wind, as if pent up and waiting such a signal, blew in an impetuous gust, and a wall of water, like a tidal wave, bore down upon the cockling punt and wrenched it from its fastening. A blinding storm of rain beat into the faces of the men like a shower of lead, and a volume of water which topped the river bank at the spot where MacGregor and Bulwant Rao stood, made them beat a hasty retreat. Above the fury of the elements Bulwant Rao's voice was heard: "Mercy, mercy! the god hath spoken in his wrath. Spare me and mine, O Muth, spare me and mine!"

"Silence, you old idiot!" MacGregor yelled, as he strained his ear to catch what Ashcroft was shouting from the punt, which, bottom upwards, was spinning swiftly down stream. He turned and rushed along the bank to render his friends any assistance possible.

Across the river came fierce yells and rifle shots. Ashcroft, clinging desperately to the punt bottom, smiled faintly and nodded encouragingly to Bell. They were in a twenty-knot current and the outlook was black. The punt had been carried over towards the Pimpri bank, and was almost opposite to the bathing ghāt at the foot of the temple.

"Tantia's in a bad way," Bell bawled, shaking his head like a wet retriever. "Ah! what's that?"

Something—somebody plumped into the water from the overhanging cliff, and with a couple of powerful strokes reached the punt and gripped it. The light was still treacherous, and the speed of the current was making him dizzy, but Ashcroft recognised their comrade in distress—*it was Tantia Bheel!*

Tantia recognised Ashcroft almost instantly. He spat out a mouthful of water and grinned. "We go to our doom together, sahib—outlaw and police officer. It is all the same to the river!"

Ashcroft felt for his revolver, but hastily gripped the punt again with both hands. The river was too strong for him to retain his hold with one. Besides, his ammunition was wet.

"Never shoot a drowning dog," Tantia exclaimed bitterly. They had turned the bend of the river and were tearing madly along to the next, half a mile away.

"I'm getting cramp," Bell cried, in a quiet, resigned voice. "If we don't strike the bank at the next bend, I'm done for. Never mind me, Ashcroft," he added, as the big man attempted to get close enough to support him. "It's every one for himself now."

Swifter and swifter with the increasing volume of water, the current bore them along.

The light was improving' but the speed at which they were travelling rendered objects on the bank blurred and hazy. The punt was close to the left bank now and looked as if it would strike it at the bend.

Crash! the punt had struck the bole of a tree, blown down by the tempest and half submerged in the river. Ashcroft gripped a branch with one hand and with the other caught Bell, as the latter was drifting helplessly away. A minute later both stood on land once more.

Tantia had gained *terra firma* first. He stood a few yards away and laughed ironically. "Adieu," he exclaimed, "till a more fitting occasion. Give my salaams to Fielding sahib," and he turned on his heel.

But for once he had been too confident. As he turned, he tripped over a root of the tree that had been felled by the tempest, and nimbly as he recovered himself, Ashcroft, for all his great bulk, was quicker. Bell, forgetting his miserable plight as he watched the struggle with parted lips, saw a knife flash from the outlaw's girdle; but again Ashcroft was as good as his man. There was a crack, and the knife fell from the dacoit's nerveless grasp. Ashcroft had broken his wrist with one sharp wrench. The two forms writhed—black against white. Now one was uppermost, now the other. At length, just as Bell was starting forward to render what assistance he could, the huge Englishman sprang to his feet grasping Tantia by the waist. He swung the outlaw above his head, and then with all his strength dashed him to the ground.

SOMETHING—SOMEBODY PLUMPED INTO THE WATER FROM THE OVERHANGING CLIFF.

Tantia Bheel lay still and mute; and as the two Englishmen hastened to bind him with their belts, Fielding and his men, with shouts of satisfaction, came hurrying down the hill.

THE END.

A Soldier's Life. By P. J. Thorpe.

VI.—LIFE ON A TROOPSHIP.

TIME was, in the days of the old sailing-ships, when a voyage on a troopship lasted for six months, when the men settled themselves down as they would on shore, and when parades, guards, and duties were carried out just as they would be in barracks.

But the march of science brought steamships in its wake, and the old transports disappeared from off the face of the waters, or, if any of them are still afloat, it is as hospital hulks at some of our naval training depôts.

The troopship of to-day revels in luxuries

ONE OF THE PLEASURES OF LIFE—ON A TROOPSHIP.

compared with its compeer of other days, and if the soldier nowadays grumbles to himself at his cramped accommodation and his ship's fare, he can take comfort in the thought that he enjoys advantages that his brother-in-arms of the sailing-ship period never even dreamed of.

As soon as soldiers embark they are told off into messes, each mess being allotted to a mess-table, which, during the interval between meals, is raised from the floor and rigged up overhead out of the way. Each table is supplied with a mess-kid, tin pannikins, and plates. The mess-kid is a large tin vessel of an oval shape, very like a kitchen boiler in appearance. It serves the double purpose of a receptacle for conveying the men's tea from the cook's galley at breakfast and tea time, and their dinners at the mid-day meal.

Their rifles are taken from the men as soon as they step on board and deposited for safe custody in the ship's armoury, where they remain until the voyage has ended. Helmets are also withdrawn and locked up in the helmet-room, the soldiers wearing instead their forage caps or the stocking-shaped caps served out to them in their sea-kits.

Boots are practically discarded and the men prowl about the ship's deck all day in their bare feet, with trousers rolled up. Indeed, apart from the discomfort of wearing boots at sea, the decks of a troopship are so constantly being washed down and swabbed, that they would soon become sodden and fall to pieces.

Breakfast takes place at an early hour in the morning, usually at half-past five, in order to clear the decks for the matutinal washing down. Long before that hour many of the men are on the upper deck, enjoying the luxury of a bath. A sail is rigged up and half-filled with sea water, and in this the bathers disport themselves at will.

Before the Tommies have well dressed themselves they hear the cry of "Scaldings!" with which warning the orderly men clear a passage for themselves as they rush along from the cook's galley, carrying heavily laden mess-kids full of steaming tea or cocoa.

Breakfast itself is a frugal meal, consisting only of tea and bread or ship's biscuits, and is soon demolished. Then begins the business of the day. The tables are washed down and slung up, the floor is swept, port-holes are opened, and the hose-pipes are turned on.

The troop-deck soon becomes a miniature sea, and then the swabbers get to work with their swabs and squeegees. An unusual amount of swearing may be heard going on, for the jack tars handling the hose-pipes are not very particular about asking the crowded Tommies to get out of the way. More often than not the first intimation the latter get is a stream of water full in the face, and there is no remedy for it. If they remonstrate, it only serves to bring other hose-pipes playing on them, and the only thing for it is to hop out of the way as quickly as possible.

The cursing Tommies are chased about from one deck to the other, and there is no peace for them until the swabbing is finished and they are allowed down the gangway again. Their first care is to get ready for the morning parade, which is generally a medical inspection, or a mere formal roll-call to hear the orders for

the day read, or to listen to precautions to be taken in case of fire or collision.

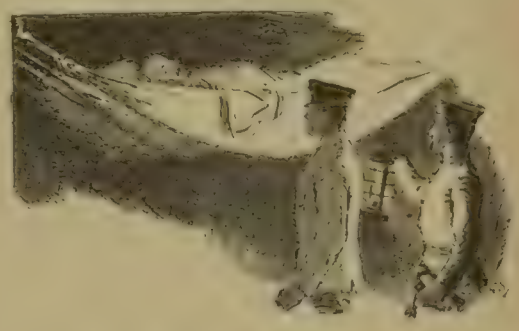
Companies are told off into watches, each watch being obliged to keep on the upper deck, day and night, in all weathers, to help the sailors in case of need. Each watch is on duty for four hours, and at night, when the time arrives for the relief of the watch on deck, there is no end of trouble and much amusement caused by the hunt for the relief amongst the huddled sleepers below.

After the morning parade, and the telling off of the companies into watches, there is nothing more in the shape of duty to be performed for the remainder of the day. In fine weather the soldiers loll about the upper deck all day long and far into the night, some reading, some snoozing, but the greater part of them gambling. Although gambling of any description is strictly forbidden by the King's Regulations, it is carried on with impunity on board a troopship, nor do the naval or military officers on board make the slightest attempt to stop it.

At mid-day the "taps" (dinner-bugle) is greeted with a cheer, and a rush is made down the gangway to the mess-tables, for a "life on the ocean wave" arouses all that is great in a soldier's appetite. Dinner consists of either salt-pork, salt junk (pickled beef), bouilli-beef, or mutton, with an occasional ration of fresh meat. To this is added potatoes, preserved vegetables, pickles, and a small allowance of lime-juice to keep away scurvy. It was customary at one time to allow every soldier on board a pint of porter daily, but this, I understand, has been abolished, and soldiers have now to purchase their beer from the ship's canteen.

The interval between dinner and tea-time is passed in the same way as the forenoon, but at night singing and instrumental music are indulged in on the fo'c'sle, with an occasional variation in the way of a step-dance or a recitation. About twice a week the regimental band get their instruments out of the hold and discourse sweet music, and nowhere does the soldier value his band so much as at sea.

Before dusk, hammocks are served out to the men. Each man's mess number is marked on a wooden tab attached to the hammocks, and the seaman issuing them calls out the numbers so marked. Each man claims his hammock



THE NAVAL OFFICER GOING ROUND.

and making for a convenient spot, soon fastens it to the hooks overhead. Those for whose hammocks no accommodation can be found, have to content themselves with sleeping on the deck beneath.

Discipline is very strict on board ship, and at "tattoo" every man, except those on watch, has to leave the upper deck and betake himself to his sleeping-berth, the naval officer on duty going round shortly afterwards to satisfy himself that the men have turned in.

This is the usual routine of a soldier's life at sea, varied occasionally by a fire-alarm, which is only given about twice or three times during the voyage, in order to accustom the men how to act in the event of a real fire occurring.

THE INFORMER

A PUBLIC SCHOOL STORY.

By FRED SWAINSON.

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell.

SYNOPSIS.

After Erpingham meets a friend of his named Burton at Daly's Theatre, a surprising change comes over him. He brightens up generally and astonishes Firmin by playing football and putting on the gloves in the gym. At footer he shows himself to be as good a player as Mordaunt, and with the gloves he lowers the colours of Kent, hitherto considered the best boxer at Harford. "They teach 'em how to box at Stonehurst," sneers Ellis, a friend of Kent's, to Firmin, and Firmin immediately determines that he will get to the bottom of the Erpingham mystery.

CHAPTER XXV.

ERPINGHAM'S STORY.

WHEN Dick came out of the dressing-room he was in high feather. The delight of battle was still on him and spoke in his eyes and in the poise of his head. Kent was on his heels, and for the life of me I could not resist a sneer when his burly figure framed itself in the doorway. "Why do you get Ellis to do your dirty work, Kent? You should have seen the thing through yourself."

"What do you mean, Toothpick?" said Kent shortly.

"Can't see any difference between your raking up Erpingham's past, and your egging Ellis on to do it for you—except it's meaner."

"Does Ellis know?" asked Kent.

"Isn't Ashford's beauty your chum?" I asked venomously.

"Look here, Firmin," said Kent, drawing me aside and speaking slowly, as though he meant I should make no mistake in what he had to say, "when I tackle Erpingham I'll thank no one to do it for me. I did not tell Ellis. I did not know he knew. But, you see, the first Harford fellow who dips into 'Wisden' is bound to notice it. Then, if he's no cause to like Erpingham—has Ellis?—he can make inquiries—like me. But anyhow, after to-night's work I'm not taking any hand against Erpingham. He's a smug, and he's 'pi,' but he's a man, whatever his Stonehurst record was."

"Then stop that fellow's mouth."

William Kent contemplated me for a moment curiously. "No, Toothpick, I won't. Ellis can do as he thinks fit. He should not have interfered with me, and I allow others what I claim for myself—liberty. But mind, I have nothing to do with it. Speak to Ellis yourself," said Bill, turning on his heel.

Speak to Ellis! My gorge rose at that. When one spoke to Kent, one spoke to some one who had the attributes of manhood, but Ellis! Could a fellow of his kidney do Dick any harm? A feeling of pride in my friend made me flinch instinctively from doing him the dis-service of discussing him with Ellis. Let that cad do his worst.

Dick said, almost as soon as he saw me, "Frank, Jack Burton is coming down to-morrow. Keep yourself free if you can."

"The man we met at Daly's?"

"Yes. We must show him round."

"Serene. I'll come along with you to Harbour's now. I've got something to tell you."

"Important?" asked Dick.

"Don't know. You're the best judge of that, but a certain cad—Ellis to wit—thinks it rather important."

"Ah," was all Dick said, but he strode on more quickly.

In Erpingham's room we sat opposite each other. "Dick, there are one or two fellows here who know you came to Harford from Stonehurst."

Erpingham paled, but he kept his eyes on me steadily. "Go on, Frank."

"I learned it quite a long time ago *via* Bob Leaf, he *via* Yolande who, of course, knew through your cousin. You did not seem keen on speaking of your pre-Harfordian days, so I said nothing about it, and, indeed, it was no affair of mine. Leaf got into trouble over his share of the knowledge."

Here I sketched out the Pool incident, and Dick's pallor vanished. "What a brick young Bob is! And what a cad Kent! Frank, on my honour I don't understand just such a fellow as Kent."

"Well, never mind Kent: it's not him we are dealing with. Kent didn't get it out of Bob, but he found out through 'Wisden.' That was the night before you and I went to the Yorkes'. Here is Kent's parting shot to me." I handed Erpingham Bill's note. "I don't understand it, of course."

My friend read the letter, and when he came to the end the pallor crept over his face again. Kent's poisoned gibe about cripples found its mark. I could see that. He handed it back to me, and I threw it into the fire.

"Go on, Frank," he said hoarsely.

"Well, when we came back, Kent, as you know, went to hospital with his foot, and when he returned he told me he was not going to trouble about you."

"Why?"

"Because you could play footer. . . . A pretty rotten reason, as I told him."

Dick stared at me and then broke into a grim smile. "Curious."

"Then to-night, half an hour ago, Ellis, that cad from Ashford's, the fellow you ducked in the tench pond, comes sneering up and breathes the word 'Stonehurst' in my ear. Hatred and malice were written in his face. He has got hold of your antecedents, Dick. I have come to tell you this."

Dick sprang up and gripped my hand. "Frank, you are the best fellow in the world. Truer friend no man ever had." He looked down upon me, his eyes shining. "Frank, I always meant to tell you why I came to Harford. To do so would have been horrible torture once, but now, though I care, it is only because you are you."

"Never mind me, Dick," said I hastily. "Dick, does it matter what Kent may know, and Ellis will say?"

Dick snapped his fingers in uttermost contempt. "That for Kent or Ellis—*now*. Since Yolande had the idea of going to Daly's I care for no one's opinion excepting yours. For they cannot know."

"Yolande! Daly's!" I exclaimed. "How do they come in?" But in a flash I recalled our evening at the theatre and said, "Has Burton anything to do with it?"

"We'd better both sit down, Frank, hadn't we? My tale isn't short, and Burton does come in—rather!"

I sat down and Dick screwed himself into his chair. He spoke right on, looking for the most part into the fire, but now and then fixing his eyes on my anxious face.

"I suppose I was really a good little chap when I was a youngster; anyhow, when I left my preparatory school near Maidenhead to go to Stonehurst, I was rather near the mark of the fellow 'who never gave his parents a moment's anxiety in his life.' Personally, I don't value the breed very much, now. However, there it was. I went to Stonehurst with all sorts of good testimonials as to character, was top of the lot who took the entrance examination, and, in a manner of speaking, went into the school with flags flying. I came back at the term's end with Stonehurst's *ditto ditto* to all that Maidenhead had said about me. I don't know how it was after that, honestly I don't. Perhaps I got conceited and slacked, perhaps I had been pushed on a little too quick and was suffering from the reaction, and perhaps in my house the juniors were youngsters rather more than ordinarily full-blooded, rather more than ordinarily well-tipped, and rather more than ordinary 'good fellows' without too much brain behind the good fellowship, you understand, Frank. Well, whatever it was, my next term's report was not quite so good—no big drop though—and the next a bit worse, and the next a bit worse again. I was slipping down. I was on the slope, and found it easier to roll down than to climb up. All this, though, without consciously slacking; I thought I was doing

all right, but somehow I wasn't quite so keen, and life at Stonehurst was jolly pleasant whether you worked or not. Mater was upset each time my report arrived, for I believe, like all mothers, she fancied I was a little don in knickerbockers, and pater got quite gruff when I turned up at my second Christmas with what I may fairly say was a hanging report. The truth is, after that Christmas I was glad to get back to Stonehurst, and after a time—though I'd never have believed it possible once, and hope it never will be possible again—I was sorry to leave school to go home. I took invitations when I could manage them for part of the holidays, and curled up stubbornly at home for the rest. I fancied I was being hardly treated, because the pater said what he thought. Then, I suppose, I really did slack, and contrived to get into most school rows, but as I managed to get into all kinds of elevens at the same time, I had quite a small following of fellows who looked up to me as a 'sport.' And so on. When I was in Lower Fifth I had a certain reputation. I may as well say just what it was. I was looked upon as the coming 'man' in Stonehurst's games: footer, cricket, gloves, a fellow who could work if he would, and the proud possessor of a beastly temper. The seniors and the monitors left me alone, as they will a fellow of that sort—all except one, Jack Burton—the fellow who is coming here to-morrow.

"Jack Burton was captain of Stonehurst—the only fellow who treated me on my merits. He told me candidly enough I was little short of an ass, for which, though it was utter truth, I didn't like him. I was his equal and was treated as such on the fields, but once off the turf I was Dick Erpingham, Lower Fifth, and poor Fifth at that, and he was John Burton, Sixth, monitor, captain of Stonehurst, even-handed dispenser of justice, very much at my service. I was constantly coming under his notice and finally he had me up to the Head when the upshot might have been expulsion—at least, I thought so. I was strung up for six weeks instead, and during that six weeks I nursed my dislike into a festering hatred of Burton. When my time was up, the very Saturday I was free to play footer, to haunt the gym., I was chosen to play for the Rest against the Sixth. I stepped on to the field with one idea in my head—to make an ass of Burton. I felt myself capable of it. I was centre forward and he played back, and the long and short of it was I found it harder to make an ass of Jack Burton than I had thought. Such fellows as he are not easily made asses of. How many times I went for him I can't say, but he was bigger, stronger, heavier than I—he was nearly three years older—and I rolled off him into the mud. Some of the Rest who knew my feelings about Jack, told me not to make an exhibition of myself, and this remark, which showed me I had only made an ass of myself, lifted my hatred to the boiling-point. I *would* lay Burton out before we went off. Pig that I was, I thought of nothing but seeing him with his face in the mud.

"All in a moment I became quite cool: a cold vindictiveness took the place of my feverish hate: I made up my mind quite clearly, calmly, what I would do—something I'd never done before, something fellows of our run do not do. I would bring Burton over neck and crop by a dirty foul.

"I bided my time, and at last the chance came. The ball came to Burton: he went striding for it full pelt and I went too."

Dick paused, and as he took his eyes off the fire and looked at me, his face was deadly white. "At the last moment, Frank, I couldn't do it. Something—decency, breeding, instinct, call it what you like—held me back at the very, very last second. I drew back. I was too late. Burton and I met, and he rolled over neck and crop into the mud. That was not all. Above the shouts of the fellows I heard something that sounded like the snapping of a dry stick."

It was some minutes before Dick could go on. "To make a long story short, one of Burton's friends came to my room before bed-time and told me to my face I was a cad. Jack Burton was unconscious, and if he lived he'd be a cripple for life.

"I cut out of Stonehurst that night.

"I deserved all I suffered, Frank, but I can say I'd almost rather die than live over again those next few months. Pater ran down to Stonehurst. I was told briefly that Burton's thigh was broken, and the look of contempt and sorrow on the pater's face makes me shiver when I think of it, yet. Days went on, awful days. There was nothing to do but think and I thought. I looked upon myself as being the murderer of Burton's life, and the only little grain of comfort I had—and how small a grain it seemed you can judge, Frank—was that at the very last I did not try to foul. I do want you to see that, Frank.

"One day pater spoke his mind. If he sent me to Harford, would I work? or would

I go into a business house in the City? I had a day to think it over. I said I'd go to Harford. Pater made his conditions: Work: something tangible to show for it at the end of the term, and until he gave the word I had not to touch bat or ball or gloves. I saw Forder too, and he made his conditions also. Frank, that was why I had to split on Mordaunt: in Forders' eyes I saw marching orders if I did not speak the uttermost truth.

"Then Yolande took us to the theatre. There I met Burton. He was, as you saw, strong and hearty, and far from being a cripple; he was, in your own words, 'a remarkably fine specimen of English youth.' No one but myself can know how much this meeting meant to me. I knew what a load of misery I had been carrying when the load rolled off at Daly's. I spoke to Burton, and on my honour he seemed as glad to see me as I was to see him—so. He absolved me from all blame. He had slipped his knee before I crashed into him, and whether I had been his bitterest foe or dearest friend, falling as he did, the result would have been the same. He had left Stonehurst at the end of the term, by which time he was well enough to be moved, and had never dreamed I was blamed for the accident. He wrote me, though, to say 'Good-bye,' thinking he owed me one after all our rows, but—well, I never got that letter. If I only had!

"I wrote pater immediately I got home from Yorke's, and he told me I could play if I wished. He was satisfied that I had had my lesson. The rest you know. *Now*, Frank, I care not one straw for what any one can say about me. I always had that one grain of hope that after all I was not responsible for Burton's accident, and Burton has cleared me. I am clean. Let Ellis do his worst."

I clasped Dick's hand—and for a minute or two our behaviour was very un-English.

"On a certain date in February I shall drink to the health of Yolande Yorke, of Frank Firmin, and Jack Burton, wherever I may be," said Dick, solemnly. "Better friends no one ever had."

"And Leaf," said I.

"And Bob," said Dick, penitent at his forgetfulness.

"And now, Frank, there is just one thing more," resumed Dick, curiously shy all in a moment. "When I fished Anson out of the water and found you on the bank, I saw that you were lame. You were what I dreamed so often and thought so constantly Burton would always be. I felt——"

I stopped Dick. I knew what he felt. I had seen it in his eyes. "Beastly sorry for me," I said. "I catch that look in the eyes of all my friends, in Jim's, in Yolande's, in her mother's, in Crosse's, in Forder's. I almost watch for it coming. I——"

HE ROLLED OVER NECK AND CROP INTO THE MUD.

How Dick and I jawed that night! It was pretty near lock-up when I went home, and I dropped off to sleep knowing full well that on the morrow the gloomy doubts which

clung to Erpingham would be lifted for ever.

For I had my plan cut and dried to polish off Mister Ellis and any other of his breed there might be about.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ELLIS'S BOMBSHELL.

AT breakfast on the morrow Gale came to my study. "Frank, I've just had an interview with Ellis—that Ashford fellow. He's been a-murmuring murder, treason, maiming and heaven knows what about your friend Erpingham. Isn't it time all these filthy rumours were nailed to the counter—if you can nail them? *I* don't believe 'em, for one. But in Erpingham's interests, don't you think we'd better settle with Ellis and Kent once for all?"

"Make any proposals to Ellis?"

"I wanted to see you first, but I do propose to have it out. What do you say to Ellis's explaining to our seniors after dinner to-day? We could let Erpingham know."

"Good idea, Gale. Tell Ellis to have his—what's the French?—*dossier*—all complete. He'll need it very badly."

"You'll be there?"

"Won't I just!"

I told Dick just how matters lay. He was for coming across, much as he disliked the ordeal, but I was not anxious that he should. "Let me stage-manage the business, Dick. I'll cook Ellis's goose for him."

"It is a funny coincidence that Burton's coming down to-day."

"Well, rather," I said aloud. To myself, I added, "Burton's the man I'll show Crosse's." (Dick might have objected to this.)

Burton came down to Harford by the morning train, and he and Dick and I pottered round the old place. I asked him to call on me when he had lunched at the Queen's. "About two would suit, I think. Then we'll go on to Harbour's and pick up Dick."

"That fit in for you?" asked Burton, turning to Erpingham.

"Couldn't be better," said Dick.

Then I found Bob Leaf and primed him. "Be in my study, Bob, after dinner, and if any one calls, bring him down to Hall."

All right," said Bob, calmly.

"It's about Erpingham."

"I say, Frank," stammered Bob, "is it all right?"

"*Bew*tiful," said I, and I told Bob the whole tale there and then.

"That cad Ellis will get what he deserves to-day," he said exultingly.

"Hope not, Bob. Torture is rather out of fashion."

When dinner was over and the juniors had gone, the seniors fiddled with their knives, wondering what on earth they were to hear. Gale said, "Ellis of Ashford's house thinks he has something to say about Erpingham which we ought to hear. I propose we do, and once for all see how much truth is behind his ugly rumours."

"I second that," said I promptly.

Bill Kent gave me a puzzled glance, and when Ellis came in and Barry drew him out a chair, Bill said, "'Shut up' is my tip, Fred."

"Not a bit, Bill," said Ellis, truculently. "I've got something to say, if you haven't."

"All right," said Bill. "Then look out."

"Now, Ellis," said Gale. "We're waiting."

"First, then," said Ellis, leering blandly round our mess, "Erpingham was at Stonehurst before he came here."

Ellis's first shot told. Crosse's seniors looked at one another with something approaching stupefaction. "He was at Stonehurst until he was kicked out."

"Lie number one," said I, flaming despite myself.

"Shut up, Firmin," said Gale, savagely. "We'll hear you later."

Ellis smiled a large smile, ignoring my interruption. "He was at Stonehurst until he was kicked out. Why was he kicked out? In full light of day he laid himself out to injure a fellow and succeeded. That fellow, Jack Burton, ex-captain of Stonehurst, is a cripple—a cripple for life."

Crosse's seniors stared at one another with undiluted horror in their faces. I said nothing further just then, but kept my eyes on Ellis. The fellows took theirs off him and one another and turned them on me. At that moment I shuddered at a quick, darting thought which came to me. Had this been true!

"Go on, Ellis," said Gale hoarsely, "and be very sure that what you say is true."

"It's true enough," said Ellis, blandly confident.

"How did it happen?" demanded Gale, sternly.

"In a footer game. He deliberately fouled Burton, openly, no hole in a corner, mind, and Burton, as I say, is a cripple. I had this from a fellow at Stonehurst who was there at the

time. There always was bad blood between the pair. Here's the letter." Gale let it lie as though it contained something poisonous. "Well, there's nothing more—shouldn't think you wanted any—but I believe Bill Kent can back me up so far."

"Can you?" asked Gale.

"That was what I heard," said Bill slowly: "But all the same you all hear me say I have nothing to do with bringing this forward."

"There's nothing more to Erpingham's side of the question," resumed Ellis, "but surely there's something to be said on ours!"

"Say it," said I, sneering.

"I mean to, Firmin. You all know his history at Harford. He spies for Forder—he, this cripple manufacturer, splits on Jim——"

"Drop that," said Jim, half rising angrily. "My affairs aren't in question."

"Er—er—splits on Mordaunt," purred Ellis sweetly, "for something that is quite mild compared with his own performances. He poses partly as a saint, partly as one of the reading gang, and, covered by Firmin, contrives to keep up his end. Then Forder makes him a monitor, sends him, this broken-winded saint, to show Harbour's house a continuous good example, and we are expected to show deference to him."

"Never saw any one pay such deference to another as you did to Erpingham at the tench pond," I observed.

"He had his turn then; mine's now, Toothpick. Turn about is fair play. But, without beating about the bush any longer, my vote is to make Harford too hot to hold him. We have no room here for damaged saints."

Ashford's man sat down.

Gale gave me a look and I rose slowly. "Erpingham *was* at Stonehurst, but all the rest is a miserable lie," said I with the utmost solemnity. "Erpingham was *not* kicked out. He did *not* foul Burton. Burton is *not* a cripple."

"Proof?" said Ellis even more cheerfully than before. "Bill, just tell the fellows that your information is the same as mine."

"I've said it once," said Kent quietly.

"And if Gale will read that note I passed him a minute ago——"

Gale took up the letter gingerly. "Don't," said I. "Everything, bar one, that Ellis has said about Erpingham, I repeat, is a miserable lie. I do not question but that Ellis believes otherwise. I do him that justice. But who is he to make himself protector of Harford's morals? Sublime spectacle! Ellis's leaving Ashford's, that home of all the virtues, and Ellis's posing as our white knight! Why has he come out? Because Erpingham, than whom a nobler fellow never

"ERPINGHAM WAS *NOT* KICKED OUT."

came to Harford, treated him like the cur he is!"

I sat down amid the troubled silence of Crosse's seniors.

Leaf had the true dramatic instinct. His knock on the door almost punctuated my last word. He put his head in and said, "Mr. Burton to see you, Firmin."

Jack Burton walked in, straight as a lance, and I pushed back my chair and went to meet him. When Bob's high, clear "Burton" reached the ears of the seniors, they slewed round as one man. Was this man Ellis's cripple? I glanced at Kent. His mouth was pursed up in a silent whistle. Ellis was scarlet. A cur, a whipped cur, if ever there was one.

Burton looked round Crosse's seniors, rather puzzled, and naturally, as to why I had had him brought to the dining-hall. It was an immense lack of taste on my part, of course, but when one deals with such as Ellis, white kid gloves aren't the best wear.

Gale got up and said to me, "Is this Mr. Burton, Ellis's man?"

"Yes," said I.

Then Gale said, "Very sorry to trouble you, Mr. Burton, but we have been hearing about you in connection with Erpingham. In fact, we were discussing you just now."

"Ah," said Burton, looking quickly at me. "I see. Well, I can put that matter right. I owe it to Erpingham."

"Here's my chair," said Gale, drawing it out. "Very sorry to trouble you, you know, but it is very important to us—and Erpingham."

Very quietly Jack Burton told his tale. It would take too long to write, and, besides, you know it from Erpingham's point of view already. His final words were something like these: "In that game, undoubtedly, I did my best to bottle up Erpingham, and I think he will admit he did as much as he legitimately could to stop me. But there it ended. My accident had really nothing to do with Dick. I slipped my knee when I was five yards away from Erpingham—I had done it once or twice before—and I shot over the top of him in a heap, anyhow. I couldn't help myself. I did not know anything for hours after I fell. I did not even feel them set the leg. I left Stonehurst as soon as I was well enough to get up, and I did not know that Dick had been blamed for the accident: I did not even know that he had cut out of Stonehurst when he was told I was pretty bad. I wrote him on other matters, but I fancy the address was wrong, as he never got my letter. However, I hope I have put the thing right with you all at Harford, and there will be a letter in my old school magazine which will put the matter right there—as far as it can be put right. In a nutshell, Erpingham has been suffering for months under a charge of maiming me—and I am not maimed, you see—while as a matter of fact he had nothing whatever to do with my accident. If I had crashed into my dearest friend under the same circumstances, the result would have been just the same. That chance meeting with Erpingham at the theatre is the happiest event of my life. Are you quite satisfied?" asked Burton, turning to Gale, who was standing at his elbow.

"I am," said Gale. "And," facing the assembled seniors, "those who agree with me that Erpingham is cleared, absolutely cleared, of that horrible charge, please signify."

"Does that suit you, Firmin?" said Burton, smiling to me.

"*I* never doubted Erpingham," said I.

Ellis slunk out, but when he was at the door, Gale said softly, almost cooingly, "Ellis, you've forgotten your letter."

Ellis came back almost writhing in self-abasement, and picked up his letter. Had he not done so, I know enough of Gale to feel sure that Ashford's man would have been brought back by the scruff of the neck.

Together, Burton and I went out of Crosse's, leaving the seniors in little knots discussing matters. Bill Kent watched our departure, a chastened smile playing over his face.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HARRIS MAKES A SPEECH.

AS I expected, Ellis had spread the news of Erpingham's supposed pre-Harfordian atrocities, and it had travelled through the school with the haste usually ascribed to evil tidings. Ellis had openly threatened that Dick would be drummed out from amongst us, and told all and sundry of the meeting of Crosse's seniors to consider the matter. Well, the meeting took place, and, except for the one or two poor creatures who love the scent of scandal, the school heaved a sigh of relief at the result.

"What a ghastly lie!" said Harford. "Will Erpingham pound Ellis into powder?" asked the juniors with bated breath.

And so, after being a seven days' wonder,

the Erpingham mystery passed out of Harford's mind.

At first school in the morning, the sixth crowded round Erpingham and congratulated him, not on the result of Crosse's meeting, for the fellows had taste if I had not, but on his wonderful appearance at the gym. "I should say you stand a decent chance of bringing the Heavies to Harford, Erpingham."

Dick looked up in surprise. "I'm not going to Aldershot, Macpherson."

"What!" said Gale. "Not going!"

"No fear. I entered just to make the even number and avoid a sparring round. And even if I were keen on it, there's a better fellow in Harford than I—Kent."

"Hear, hear!" said I.

"Why, Frank sees as much," said Dick, with a sly glance at me.

The Sixth looked at one another guiltily. Was this the fellow they had wanted to hound out of Harford!

"My win over Kent was a sheer fluke. He'd lick me six times out of seven, and so I told Marston."

"You've told Marston definitely you won't go?" asked Bull.

"Of course."

Bull murmured, "'We shall not see his like again.'"

"Does Bill know?" asked some one, turning to Mordaunt.

"No, he doesn't," said Jim, with a curious look at Dick. "I believe he'd rather pull off the Heavies than take all the wickets at Lord's."

When Jim informed Bill that Erpingham regarded his win at the trials as a fluke, and had told Marston he would not accept the honour of representing Harford at Aldershot, Bill Kent had stared and given his silent whistle. "I believe Kent rocked under what he calls Erpingham's generosity more than he did under Erpingham's right on the jaw," Jim told me.

Dick and I, now at last really and truly free from all anxieties, went our usual steady gait for the Arts, and Jim ground hard for the Brownjohn. Kent, in losing Jim, had taken up with Ellis—a slight change!

Easter came and went. Dick and I read steadily: now at Crosse's, now at Harbour's. We attended at Meads on Saturday, where Jim was his own inimitable self behind the stumps, or, bat in hand, treated the bowling on its merits. His Saturday game was his sole slack from the Brownjohn. Once, as the three of us sat watching the school "tail" wagging valiantly, Forder came and dropped in between Dick and Jim. I think our "just old beast" went out of his way to be grimly civil to Mordaunt. Bill Kent, who passed by demurely, gave us a blighting look. "Look out, Toothpick," he said, with a sweet smile to me as I turned in that night, "or you four will drift into kiss-in-the-ring before long."

Crosse's juniors held a meeting the day after we got back to Harford. Business: election of captain of Crosse's Second Cricket XI. King was resigning the honour; he, like a wise man, put it that way, for Fawcett had discovered that there was small likelihood of his friend being re-elected. "Truth is, old man, you've got into their black books. A fellow who's got such a smart tongue as your's puts their backs up."

"Lummy!" said King aghast, "I didn't fancy I made 'em squirm to that extent."

"Well, what can you expect when you tell 'em the truth, the cold truth?"

"Why, Rudge was always growling at 'em."

"Growl, yes, but he never got in under their waistcoats as you do. Remember how you spoke up to Faulder for letting Bottle score the winning goal?"

"Well, hadn't I told Faulder fifty times to field the ball instead of taking flying kicks? What goal-keeper does that when there's loads of time to clear?"

"Right O! But Faulder has felt green ever since you purred to him in the dressing-room."

"What did I say?"

"*Inter alia*," said Fawcett, with a cough of apology for the Latin, "that he reminded you of a monkey you'd seen at the Zoo, only they'd forgotten to put netting quite all round him."

"I must have been waxy!" said King.

"My aunt, but Faulder was."

"Then Faulder's at the bottom of this?"

"Yes, and I rather fancy he's bidding for the vacant place."

"Look here," said King wrathfully, "I'll propose you, old man."

"No, you won't. Gale looked at me in a sort of way to-day at dinner, and I'm on trial for Crosse's First to-morrow. So are you. He asked me to tell you."

"My eye, here's promotion. Really! Well, now I don't care a hang about the captaincy, but I'll talk to Faulder between now and holiday time, see if I don't."

"Here's a tip. Propose some one else. I'd

say Leaf. I'll second him, and we'll take the wind out of Faulder's sails like that."

"And Bob," said King, "won't stand Faulder's rot any more than I."

"Well, now that we're to play for the First, Bob's out and away the best of the old gang. Ain't I modest? He'd stand a good chance."

"What about Faulder's?"

"Well, not very bright. If it had been in mid term and he'd stood teas and ices for a week or so, he'd have had a fighting chance. But we're all flush now."

So when Crosse's juniors met, Fawcett and his chum had their plan of campaign cut and dried, and King took command straight away.

"I propose old Rudge to the chair," he began.

"I second," said Fawcett promptly, and Rudge was dragged out from the back, grumbling as usual. Hardly was he in his seat than King was on foot. "We're all here to elect a captain for our Second XI. I have just heard from Gale that he's trying me for the First to-morrow, and you know what that means."

"Gale's an ass," said Faulder, promptly.

"Well," said King, suavely, "I won't dispute Patrick's knowledge of asses. He sees one every time he looks in his glass, or follows his own shadow, or keeps goal. Don't hold him down, Harris." Here ensued a pause in Mr. King's address—what time Harris and Baylis laid restraining hands upon Faulder. "Mr. Chairman," resumed King, turning to the blinking Rudge, "I was going to say, when that unmannerly interruption took place, that I desire to resign the captaincy."

"We meant to kick you out, anyway," shouted Harris.

"Pity you didn't get in your kick, Bertie," purred King, and went on: "I did my best as captain last year. We were handicapped by the absence of Bob Leaf—who had unfortunately to suffer from the imbecility of Faulder and his cronies—and some confounded rotten fielding at cover—I am sorry to mention Patrick again—but, on the whole, I did as well as was to be expected."

"Hear, hear!" said Faulder, venomously.

"With such a rotten cover," went on King. "But now, well, I resign, but I should like to propose the new captain."

"Fawcett, of course!" chimed in Harris.

"Wait till that's put to the meeting," crowed Faulder, with joyful anticipation.

"Well, I did think of Fawcett, but he said he couldn't see his way clear—considering the lamentable way you bossed young Bottle's shot last term and lost us the final Junior——"

"That was footer," almost shrieked the outraged Faulder.

"That's just what it wasn't, Pat. But even at cricket Fawcett couldn't really stand some of the off fielding. Could you?"

"No fear," said Fawcett, piously. "Besides, Gale has told me to go down to the First nets, too, and I'm tired of burbling kids, any way."

"So I've got a name to propose to you," King went on, "the name of a fellow who has been treated pretty badly by some of us in the past, and of the best cricketer by miles and miles of those of the old XI left—Bob Leaf."

"I second that," said Fawcett, promptly. He ran a quick, discriminating eye over the juniors and saw that Bob's name was received with no disfavour, especially as what his chum had said about Bob was true enough. "Put the question, Teddy," whispered Fawcett, without waiting for any other name to be proposed. Rudge, who had been chosen chairman by the two friends for a very deep-seated reason—they could bustle him—departed from the accepted procedure of meetings at Harford and put the question forthwith without waiting for any other name to be proposed. "Those who are in favour of Bob?" said Teddy, slowly.

Up went the hands round the dining-tables, and in a moment, whatever might have been his private ambitions, which King and his friend assumed as proved, Faulder saw that more than half had voted for my fag. Rudge gravely counted them, and moved King and Fawcett to unchastened laughter by asking Faulder if his hand was up.

"Yes," said Patrick, almost frantic at the chuckle of the cronies.

"He couldn't very well vote for himself," said Fawcett to nobody in particular, but reaching the proper person all the same.

"Ah! well, that ends the matter," said King, leaning back and smiling genially all round the board. "You'll get your chance next year, Pat—perhaps—if you're good."

While Bob was enjoying himself and his new-blown dignity, Harris got up. "If old Rudge hadn't put Bob Leaf's name in such a blessed hurry, I should have got up and supported King's motion."

"Don't believe you," said King cheerfully, and Bob stared at his new supporter.

"Everybody knows that Leaf was the best man in the team after Rudge left, and it is

common knowledge that we made a mistake in sending him to Coventry——"

"Hear, hear!" from King.

"And in making King captain," went on Harris, blithely.

"Hear, hear!" shouted Faulder.

"When Bob Leaf came into the XI," went on Harris, "I stood down willingly—(general guffaw)—and went back to scoring. I scored in twenty-five games last year, but it isn't half such good fun as playing. And you can't do your house much good that way, either; the other scorer won't usually take my word for the runs without a lot of jaw—(prolonged roar)—so I'm tired of scoring. And now since Leaf's captain I hope he'll give me a fair trial."

"I will, Harris, I will," said Bob, nearly weeping with laughter, and Crosse's juniors poured out of Hall feeling they had done their duty and enjoyed themselves immensely.

Bob came to me and told me of his new honour. I congratulated him, and put in a word for the enthusiastic Harris. That youth amused me. "Take him down to the nets, Bob. Sweat him no end. His catching's awful, isn't it? Well, take two balls and sky them for him. Fielding is a matter of practice."

"I meant to go over to Whitegates this afternoon, but if you'll tell them I'm coming to-morrow after dinner I'll take Harris in hand this afternoon. No good being slack with your eleven."

"Not a bit," said I, almost crowing.

So that afternoon Dick and I went to Whitegates. We found Mrs. Yorke kind as ever, and Yolande—well, Yolande.

"I DON'T LEAVE MY PALS IN THE LURCH."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

KENT: THE LAST ACT.

WHEN the day of the Brownjohn came round, it found Jim pale and anxious—the result meant so much to him. Crosse's seniors called in at Mordaunt's study and wished him good luck, and whilst I was chatting to him about exams. in general, with a little extra stress on what I considered the requirements of the Brownjohn, Dick came in. Dick, as

usual, sounded a cheery note, and I rather fancy that his few words, grounded plainly on an immense faith, steadied Mordaunt and gave him heart of grace. I don't think Bill Kent called in upon his old friend; but it would be very like Kent if he had forgotten the very existence of that momentous thing, the Brownjohn.

The two days passed; the examination was over. What the candidates had written, they had written. The result was on the knees of the gods. Mordaunt's face plainly showed he had had enough. He came in to tea in my room, and said, as he sank into my best chair, "Ouf! it's over."

"Bar Crosse's shouting when we hear, old man."

"If I'd had another month, Frank! But I'll say no more. After tea I'm going for a dip—and then to bed in blessed daylight. I haven't slept for a week."

On the Saturday, Jim and Dick and I had an invitation to dinner from Forder. When the dining was over, and the Head had taken us into his study, and his cigar was in easy trim, our "just old beast" dropped his mask a little. I had never hoped to hear him tell the story of his own school days—the days of Harford forty years ago, of old schoolmasters dead and gone, of old school customs dead and gone too, and the weekly fights, as much an institution then as the duels are to-day in Germany. "But though we were more savage than you are now, Harford turned out scholars then." So that we should not think him *laudator temporis acti*, he gave us names of lads who took to the 'Varsity more classics than many degree men now take away. And then he drew us out; the brilliant Jim, the steady Erpingham, myself.

Consequently, when we left Forder's it was pretty well near midnight. Forder himself let us out, and then the Head, tempted by the beauty of the quiet night, put on his hat and came with us. Jim and I walked on a little ahead, and Forder and Dick dropped behind, talking. Evidently the Head was going to see Erpingham as far as Harbour's door. This being so, Jim and I were for going, too. So we turned out of the High down the quiet little by-street which led to Harbour's and Ashford's. When we came into it, under the shade of the trees opposite Ashford's house we caught sight of two figures. Rather wondering why people should be loitering in the shade at that time of night, when we came level we glanced curiously across the road.

Jim whispered to me, "That's uncommonly like Kent, Frank."

"And," said I, "the other is Ellis. There's something wrong."

We both stepped across the way. Ellis had one hand on the railing, and Kent, who had him by the arm, was whispering something to his crony. Ellis replied in a sing-song whine of expostulation.

The huddled, protesting figure, stubbornly, yet aimlessly, grasping the fence, suggested only one thing to us.

"What's the row, Kent?" said Jim.

Kent, for it was indeed he, turned round. "Ellis is screwed."

"Well, for heaven's sake get him in. Forder's not fifty yards behind."

"Forder!" said Kent, thickly. "Where?"

"Coming along the High. He'll be here in a minute. Let's help with this beast."

"'Beast!'" said Ellis, indignantly. "Who's a beast? Le' go my arm, Kent. I'm all right."

"You're jolly well all wrong," said Kent. "Forder's coming."

"Forder!" whined Ellis protestingly. "I'm all right. I've got an *exeat*. Le' go my arm, Mordaunt." And Ellis clung desperately to the rail.

"An *exeat* won't save Ellis, Kent," said I, anxiously keeping my eye on the end of the road. "You can do no good with this fool. Better get in yourself. You've time. Come on."

Kent shook off my grasp roughly enough. "Hands off, Toothpick."

"Here's Forder," said Jim, in a tense whisper. "You can do it, Bill."

"No fear," said Kent. "This idiot went to Gleam because I asked him. I don't leave my pals in the lurch. I'm not a 'pi'-monger, but I can stand by a friend. Don't you think you'd better go, both of you?"

Jim and I were hurrying away fast enough, but Forder's voice called us back before we had gone a dozen yards.

"What's this?" said the Head.

Kent saluted solemnly. "Ellis is not very well, sir," he replied.

Forder said nothing. I saw him fumbling in his pocket, and the next moment a lucifer flared and sputtered. The Head held the tiny light before Ellis's face, then threw away the match with a gesture of unutterable disgust. "The boy is drunk," he said. One look at Ellis's vague, aimless, protesting attitude, the staring imbecility of his face, the glassy bright eyes, had been enough.

Not one of us said a word. Kent looked the Head defiantly in the face.

"How's this, Kent?" asked Forder, after a tense silence.

"It is my fault, entirely, sir. We have been to Gleam. I asked Ellis to come, and he did so unwillingly. I am very sorry, but Ellis was not to blame. I persuaded him against his better judgment."

"Had you an *exeat?*" said Forder, sternly.

At the word *exeat*, Ellis murmured, with a flare of stupid energy, "'Zeat, sir, yes, sir," and leaving hold of his beloved rails he fumbled wanderingly in his pockets, and after a prolonged search fished out a crumpled piece of paper. Forder took it.

"And yours, Kent?"

"I haven't one, sir," said Bill, without flinching in his steady stare.

"How did you propose to get into your house, sir?" asked the Head.

Kent answered nothing.

Then without a word more, good or bad, to either Ellis or Kent, Forder turned to us. "Mordaunt and Erpingham, take Ellis to his house, and you, Firmin, go with Kent." The Head turned on his heel, and we saw him switch out into the High the very embodiment of anger. Dick and Jim formed Ellis's "guard of dishonour," and marched him off, protesting feebly to the last, whilst Bill and I went towards Crosse's.

"My last night at Harford, Toothpick," said Kent, laughing softly.

"I'm sorry, Kent," said I.

"What a hypocrite you are, Firmin!" said he, with a savage sneer.

Five minutes afterwards Jim came in. "Bad business, Frank," he said. "Bill will have to go."

And on the morrow it was so. Kent went away by the mid-day train, but he said good-bye to one person only—Dick Erpingham. I am very sure Harford never harboured a more dangerous fellow than Kent, and I am just as sure that she never sheltered a braver. I have said that before, haven't I? In Kent's twisted code of honour the meanness of cowardice had no place; a man who will lay down his life for his friend—and Kent would assuredly—is very far removed from moral shipwreck. Are we not wonderfully made?

Kent's expulsion sent a thrill through Harford. When Ellis went, an hour or two after, his did not come even as an anti-climax. We were all glad to see him go.

Kent's expulsion and, perhaps more than that, his proud cutting of his old friend at the last, worried Jim very, very much. He talked over the matter with me, and at the conclusion said, "I never understood, Frank, you know, why Forder let me off. He had no mercy on Bill, you see."

"He knows your mater, Jim. If you had been fired out——"

"Hasn't Bill a mother, too?" said Jim hoarsely.

"Well," said I, "you were not quite so overwhelming as Bill Kent, after all."

"Wasn't I? Don't see any difference."

"Well, Forder probably did, for he's a just beast after all. But, Jim, I think Erpingham had something to do with it, too," I added.

"Erpingham!" echoed Jim.

"Didn't you meet him as you went to see Forder that night?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's only my idea, after all; there may be nothing in it."

Jim was silent for a little time. "Now, why did Erpingham split, Frank? On my honour, I wouldn't have done it. Knowing Dick as I do now, that still remains a mystery."

"Well, Dick came here under a cloud. He owed a double allegiance to Forder for taking him. He paid it. It would have been so easy to say, 'I did not see Mordaunt, sir.' Come to think of it rightly, Jim, Erpingham showed something far higher than our school-boy honour then, eh? And besides, the 'betrayal'—shall we call it?—was deliberately exacted by Forder. The old man was putting Dick through the furnace to try his metal, too."

Jim was silent, and after a little while went out. Before lights out he came into my den again.

"I've seen Dick, Frank. On that night he told Forder he would cut out of Harford if I were expelled."

"Whew! that would take some saying—to Forder," said I.

"And I believe that weighed with Forder, Frank, as much as anything."

"Forder likes Erpingham, Jim, as much as it is his nature to like any one. So perhaps——"

"And I hit him in the face half an hour after. He said I would repent that—and I do."

"Erpingham, Jim, is a really good fellow," said I solemnly. "But to finish up this business once and for all, Forder was told you had gone to Epsom. He need not have asked Dick, really."

"Who?" said Jim, blankly.

"Miss Yolande Yorke."

"Don't know the lady, Frank," said Jim, taring.

"Then you jolly well shall," said I.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN we assembled in Big School on the morrow, Forder said nothing about Kent and—not that we expected it—nothing about Ellis. But the Head had in his hands some blue papers, and in a moment all the seniors became as still as death. The Brownjohn results were to hand. I glanced across at Jim. Mordaunt was toying nervously with his watch chain, but he kept his gaze on the Head as though he would read his fate in those cold, grey eyes.

"The results of the Brownjohn Exhibition are as follows: James Mordaunt: First." Forder got no farther just then. A storm of cheering broke forth that made the very walls of Big School shake. Harfordians saw their hero safe and sound, and, like the Romans when Horatius 'in the brave days of old' reached the farther shore of Tiber, showed their joy in an ecstasy of applause. Forder waited grimly until it had subsided, then took up his parable again. "James Mordaunt, first, 318 marks; Archibald MacWhirter, second, 311; Roderick Barry, third, 285; and Frank Cursitor, fourth, 209.

"Now you have shown your feelings in the matter, I am going to express mine. First, I must express my sympathy with MacWhirter"—Jim led the cheering here—"who has so very nearly taken the scholarship; secondly, I congratulate Mordaunt on winning it. MacWhirter's papers were of uniform quality throughout, the result of sound, steady work and scholarship. Mordaunt's work was inaccurate and excellent by turns. I wish that Mordaunt had displayed the same capacity for hard work during the last year as he has shown the past few weeks. I sincerely hope he may make the best use of the scholarship at Oxford."

Mrs. Mordaunt came down to Harford that afternoon. She was radiant at Jim's success, and smiled happily upon "the firm," Mordaunt, Erpingham, and Firmin, gathered together for a company tea in Jim's room. She said, "Poor MacWhirter!" with a happy if enigmatical smile, and I said to myself (quoting, of course), "'Ah! those mothers! They would skin their dearest friend to make their darling a pair of gloves.'" Her happy "Poor MacWhirter!" seemed to me rather cruel. I did not know Archibald very well, but perhaps the loss of the Brownjohn meant as much to him as it would have meant to Jim.

Mrs. Mordaunt sailed out of Crosse's with Jim in tow, and Dick and I parted from them at Forder's gate. She shook hands with us both and told us we might expect to see her every Saturday for months to come. "That's very good of you," said I, "but Jim will be shining at Oriel then, you know."

She smiled her happy enigmatical smile again. "Perhaps, Frank, perhaps."

Jim had arranged to go on the river with us after his mother had been seen safely off to town, but we waited and waited and he came not. It was not until it was too late to think of sculling anywhere that he turned up. "Where have you been, you Brownjohn Exhibit?" said I.

"MacWhirter's," said Jim, with his mother's happy smile.

"Cheering him up?" quoth Dick, gravely.

"Well, rather," said Jim, eagerly. "He was writing to his people to say he'd just missed the Brownjohn. I told him to tear up the letter and start a new one telling them he was the one and only Brownjohn Exhibitioner."

"What!" said Dick and I in chorus.

"I'm not taking it," said Jim. "I'm here yet till Christmas at any rate—possibly till next year at this time."

"I don't understand," said I, blankly, "but hurrah! anyhow."

"Good!" cried Dick. "Buck up with it, Jim!"

"Well, it's just this. When my uncle died, the solicitors found his affairs, which also meant my mother's, in confusion; that's the correct convention, I think. Well, when the affairs had been straightened out, mater's first alarm proved groundless. Without being exactly millionaires, we're nothing like paupers. *Ergo*, that jolly old Brownjohn is not required to take me to Oxford. It will take a better man. Old Forder, to whom long life and happiness, asked me to tell MacWhirter."

"Hurrah!" cried Dick.

How we three jawed that night! The conclusion lay with Jim. "Awfully glad mater and I had that false alarm. It's done me a world of good. Frank, old boy, you'll never catch me slacking too long again. And now,

before I cut in, here's another surprise packet. I'm monitor again—Forder has buried his hatchet."

This put the coping-stone on our day, the gilded roof on our joy.

* * * * *

When the Arts examination came round, it found Dick and me ready for it, in one sense, at least. We went up to town for the time, and came back with chastened hopes. But Lord's followed swiftly on the heels of our trial, and had had Erpingham in the XI. at Lord's, we might have won by an innings. Not many fellows would stand down from that. I offered him his colours. His ball is marvellously like Kent's."

"Dick came here to work, Gale, and he has put in one solid year of it."

"Doesn't seem to have done him any harm," said Gale.

"Work never harmed any one," said I, sententiously.

THE LAST WE SAW OF WHITEGATES WAS YOLANDE'S HANDKERCHIEF WAVING FAREWELLS.

because Harford pulled it off again, easily this time, our riotous week-end in town made us forget exams. and examiners. Then, for the last fortnight of the term, what a delicious slacking time we had! Dick turned to cricket, and carried Harbour's practically on his own back into the semi-final, when Crosse's house laid him and the rest low. Gale said to me, as he watched Dick tossing up seductive slows to Jim, who was nearing his century, "If we

On the last day of the term, Dick and Jim and I went to Whitegates to say good-bye to the Yorkes. We found quite a little party of Harfordians there, Leaf and Anson, King and Fawcett—and Harris. Harris was monopolising Yolande, and pouring into her willing ear stories of cricketania—Crosse's, of course. We had tea just off the lawn under the huge copper beech and talked of Lord's and things Harfordian until it was time to go back. The

last we saw of Whitegates was Yolande's handkerchief waving farewells.

And now for the final words. Kent, we heard, entered the army. Whatever is good in Kent will come out there, I am very sure.

Dick and Jim and I went back to Harford and had another year in the old place. That year is historic as far as games are concerned. Dick captained the footer XI and Jim captained the cricket XI, and, though this may be prejudice, I fancy those XIs represented Harford's high-water mark. Mordaunt succeeded Gale as captain; the monitors' voting was unanimous on this point, and Forder confirmed it. And—this is without prejudice the old school never had a better captain. Finally, both Dick and I passed the Arts exam. with flying colours. And when we all three left for Oxford, full of Harfordian honours, our friendship remained the same in the city of spires. The firm of Mordaunt, Erpingham, and Firmin exists still.

May I repeat what I have already written? "And now, whenever Harford comes to my mind, I always see her as Dick and I saw her, coming home across the meadows. I see again the grey school buildings, the chapel spire pricking into the sky; the Houses among the broad-bosomed trees, the lights just beginning to twinkle in the studies as the fellows came home from field and river; Meads with the flight of pavilion seats glimmering greyly in the twilight; the playing-fields rolling up to the shadowy elms; the water meadows, and the dark, gleaming, silent river between."

Ah! those halcyon days!

THE END.

NEXT MONTH

JACKSON JUNIOR

A Public School Serial,

By P. G. WODEHOUSE.

THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY.

The Men who have Made it, and the Work it has Done.

IN November last the Philatelic Society of London received an official intimation that his Majesty, King Edward VII., had signified his pleasure that the Society should in future be styled "The Royal Philatelic Society, London."

This well-deserved honour crowns a consistent life of thirty-seven years, and emphasises the fact that this premier association of stamp collectors can boast of a practically unbroken series of meetings since its foundation in 1869.

It began in a very simple and unpretentious way with a meeting, on Saturday, April 10, 1869, of a few of the well-known philatelists of that day, at 93 Great Russell Street, London. Sir Daniel Cooper occupied the chair, and the Philatelic Society, London, was duly started with the following set of rules as a pronouncement of its objects and an expression of its hopes:

(1) That the Society shall be called "The Philatelic Society, London."

(2) That the objects of the Society be to collect all possible information respecting stamps; the prevention of forgeries; the facilitating and spreading of Philately; and the facilitating the acquisition and exchange of stamps among members.

(3) That all amateurs be eligible for election as members of the Society.

(4) The mode of election is to be as follows: candidates for admission to be proposed in writing by a member, and elected by ballot by majority of votes.

(5) The annual subscription to be 6s. to be paid in advance on being admitted a member of the Society, and annually on December 1.

(6) The business of the Society to be conducted by a Committee composed of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and five other members. Three members to constitute a quorum.

(7) The election of the Committee of Direction to take place by ballot at the annual meeting of the Society, to be held on the first Saturday in May.

(8) A monthly meeting to be held at 3 P.M. on the first Saturday of every month, at such place in London as the Committee may appoint.

(9) The Secretary to conduct the correspondence of the Society.

(10) The funds of the Society to be in the hands of the Treasurer, who is to present the balance sheet of the Society to the Committee in time that it may be audited and laid before the Society at the annual general meeting in the month of May.

Sir Daniel Cooper was appointed first President. Of the officers elected at that first meeting in 1869, the President died at the age of 81 in 1902, and Dr. C. W. Viner at the age of 94 in 1906, a collector to the last. Judge F. A. Philbrick is still in harness as a County Court Judge.

SIR D. COOPER, BART., K.C.M.G.
The First President of the Philatelic Society.

For many years the Society was confined to a small coterie meeting at each other's houses, or chambers, till in 1866 a room was engaged in the Salisbury Hotel, Salisbury Square, E.C. In 1892 a more pretentious move was made to a fine suite of rooms in Effingham House, Arundel Street, W.C., in the hope that the members would make the new home a sort of Club rendezvous. As the idea did not seem to commend itself to the members, the expensive rooms were given up and the present room in Southampton Row was engaged for the fortnightly meetings only, and there the Society continues its work. From 1869 the Society has held a practically unbroken series of meetings through each winter.

It has had a distinguished roll of Presidents: Sir Daniel Cooper filled the chair from 1869 to 1878, Judge Philbrick from 1878 to 1890, the Duke of Edinburgh from 1890 to 1892, the Earl of Kingston from 1892 to 1896, while his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the present acting President, was elected in 1896. Mr. T. K. Tapling, M.P., who left his great collection to the nation, to be housed at the British Museum, filled the post of Vice-President from 1881 till his death in 1891. More than any other member of the Society he raised the standard of its work, and personally directed it along lines of more thorough scientific and historical research. For ten years he was the life and soul of the Society, and when he died, in the heyday of his manhood, some of the members feared, in their despondency, that the Society would come to an end; but it struggled on. The old, thorough methods of work, however, gradually fell into disuse. Reference Lists in Tapling's day were carefully compiled jointly by the members, each member having before him his collection of the stamps under consideration. But soon after his death the Reference List work was discontinued, and the members thenceforward contented themselves with mere displays of their collections, with notes, and occasional papers.

A few years after its establishment the Society set itself the task of publishing monographs on the postal issues of the world, and it made a start in 1878 with a modest little list of the stamps of Spain. Then, after a lapse of ten years, it published a very fine work on the stamps of the British Colonies in Oceania; two years later followed a work on the British Colonies of North America; in 1891 it produced a still more ambitious work on the postal issues of the West Indian Colonies; in 1892 it published a work by Mr. Basset Hull, an Australian philatelist, on the postal issues of Tasmania; in 1892 we had the "Stamps of British India and Ceylon"; three years later appeared the first vol. of the British Colonies in Africa; in 1899 a *magnum opus* on the stamps of the British Isles by Messrs. Wright and Creeke; then in 1900 we had vol. ii.; and in 1906 vol. iii., completing a very fine work of the British Colonies in Africa. Most of these works have long since been out of print and now fetch fancy prices at auctions.

Three important Philatelic Exhibitions have been held in London under the auspices of the Society—one in 1890, the next in 1897, and the last in 1906—in the Hall of the Royal Horticultural Society at Westminster.

Many changes are contemplated under its new *régime* as a Royal Society. The first 350 members are to be the first Fellows and to have the right to place the letters F.R.P.S.L. after their names, and after this first roll is complete new Fellows will be elected only to vacancies as they occur. But the change that will most interest my young friends who read THE CAPTAIN is a provision for the admission of young collectors within the sacred and exclusive portals of the premier Society as "associates."

"Persons between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one are to be eligible for election as associates without payment of an entrance fee and with an annual subscription of ten shillings and sixpence. These associates," so runs the official announcement, "are to have the right to attend ordinary meetings of the Society and all the privileges of an ordinary member (including the receipt of the Society journal) except the right of voting and of receiving such publications as are supplied either gratuitously or at reduced rates to ordinary members. The associates are to have the right to became full members on attaining their majority."

This tardy, but important, concession to the younger generation of stamp collectors, should be matter for congratulation, for it is no light privilege to be allowed to attend the meetings and inspect the grand collections that are handed round and explained by the eminent specialists who make up the programme of the fortnightly gatherings.

Reviews.

Whitfield King's Catalogue.

MESSRS. WHITFIELD KING AND CO. send us for 1907 the seventh edition of their excellent "Universal Standard Catalogue of the Postage Stamps of the World." In their endeavour to make this the best simplified catalogue for the

general collector they have excluded from this edition the Luxemburg stamps perforated with the word "official," the Tunis stamps perforated "T" and all the confederate States locals, and the Postmasters and Carriers' stamps of the United States, and, all in good time, they will be compelled to exclude all but ordinary postage stamps sold to the public for public use. The compiler tells us that he finds that the total number of stamps issued to date, as included in this catalogue, is 20,496, of which 6153 are apportioned to the British Empire, and 14,343 to the rest of the world. Europe has issued 4361, Asia 3856, Africa 4469, America 4688, the West Indies 1657, and Oceania 1485.

Scott's Catalogue.

The standard catalogue for American collectors is known as "Scott's Catalogue," compiled by the Scott Stamp and Coin Co. of New York. It is published annually, and we have received the edition for 1907. It practically governs prices throughout the United States, but so far as British Colonies are concerned it is generally understood that it accepts the authority of the Gibbons' Catalogue, though it seems to put many of the prices lower than Gibbons', amusingly so in some cases, especially in single CAs; for instance, the scarce Cayman Islands 1*s.* is priced at $1.25, about 5*s.*, whereas Gibbons' price is 7*s.* 6*d.* (the latest selling price has been advanced to 10*s.*), and I am assured it sells readily at 15*s.* in the States. Other prices are much on a par. But in the case of American stamps Scott's is the undoubted authority. It is pleasant to note that it does not follow Gibbons' in listing the mass of bogus rubbish of so-called Pietersburg stamps.

The Stamp Market.

We have received No. 8 of Messrs. Bright and Son's "Monthly Philatelic Adviser" for January, in which the collector is advised that "Greece is a country in which you can specialise at quite a small cost. There is a splendid range of shades, papers and printings. *Take all you can get.* This country gives you an opportunity of picking up really rare stamps for a few pence, so few collectors understanding these stamps." In the single CA watermark King's Head list, the Cayman Islands 1*s.* is offered at 6*s.*, at which price it should be cheap. From the same firm we have also a "List of Novelties for 1906-7," sets of stamps, packets, albums, &c.

A very useful little publication for buyers of New Issues is "Appleton's Weekly" in which every stamp priced is in stock at the time of going to press. The publisher is Mr. T. C. Appleton, 53 North Parade, Bradford.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. E. C. (Rock Ferry).—You had better not buy Japanese, however cheap, unless you understand what you are buying, for the imitations sold in sheets as described by you are calculated to deceive all but specialists. All officials of Great Britain have been discontinued.

A. R. H. (Hafton).—The black penny of Great Britain is catalogued at 25*s.* to 40*s.* unused, and 6*d.* to 8*d.* for used copies.

B. B. (Kelvinside).—See reply to A. R. H. The stamps of Formosa are not recognised by Gibbons', but Scott's (American) Catalogue prices them, the green at $8 and the rose at $5. Personally I would not give a farthing a piece for them. They are said to exist used, but they are not excluded from Gibbons' without sufficient reason.

J. B. H. (Lewes).—The 10c. deep green U.S.A., of the 1861 series, is priced by Gibbons at 15*s.* unused, and 9*d.* used.

P. H. H. (Trelawney).—See reply to B. B. above about Formosa stamps. The other stamps you inquire about are, I believe, Japanese local or fiscal stamps; they are not ordinary postage stamps.

Anxious Inquirer (Brondesbury).—Try any of the dealers in the Strand, but as the stamps are common I doubt if you will find a ready purchaser.

H. A. E. (Clapton).—The ½*d.* Army Official misspelt "OFFICAI" is catalogued unused at 30*s.*, and used at 12*s.* 6*d.* Gibbons' for advanced collectors and Whitfield King's for young collectors.

A. W. M. (Cape Colony).—The "large oblong yellow stamp" you say the Boers issued for their despatches and lettered "On Commands Brief," are not recognised as postage stamps. I remember seeing copies at the time, but after inquiry they have been excluded from the catalogue.

G. G. H. (Cape Colony).—Stamp Auctions are held every week during the winter in London, and the catalogues include all stamps issued.

Your Gibbons' which does not include the Victoria Falls set of British South Africa must be an old edition. The stamps were issued in 1905, too late to be included in the 1905 edition, but they are fully listed and priced in the 1906 edition. I quote the list of prices for you.

	s.	*d.*
1*d.* red	0	2
2½*d.* ultramarine	0	4
5*d.* claret	0	7
1*s.* blue-green	1	1
2*s.* 6*d.* black	3	3
5*s.* mauve	6	6

Mr. Nankivell's next article will deal with "The Stamps of the Congo Free State."

WASHINGTON MINOR.

By REGINALD H. POOLE.

Illustrated by GORDON BROWNE, R.I.

WHEN old Warriner gets started on a subject he is good for half an hour, a fact which the Fourth Form at Millwood know well, and encourage. Warriner being the form-master, it is a distinct advantage that occasionally, say in the middle of a history lesson, he breaks off to give us an interesting lecture on Courage. It is the one redeeming feature of Warriner's character.

One morning we were doing French translation when we came across George Washington. That started Warriner. For the rest of the hour we heard all about George Washington and Truth. Every one was pleased, because even Truth is better than French. But no one took it really seriously except Dolan. Now, Dolan is the craziest of all the fellows in the Fourth, and there are some bounders in our form, I can tell you. When Dolan starts he is worse than Warriner. It was Dolan who tried to convert the form to vegetarianism, and nearly starved for a week. It was Dolan again who joined the No-Hat Brigade, until the authorities heard of it and sat on him But there is no time to tell of all the crazes Dolan took up. He was Irish, very Irish, and when the Irish begin a job, they don't leave go in a hurry.

But the craziest thing Dolan took up was this craze for truth. I was his first confidant, so I know what I am talking about. He stopped me just as I was going down to Grubwell's to get some refreshment.

"Say, Hassall, what did you think of Warriner this morning?" he asked.

I smiled benignantly on Dolan. He is little and round; I am tall.

"It was all right," I answered, quite enthusiastically. "It saved me a slating, I expect."

"No, but I mean seriously—what he said about Truth, the whole truth."

I know Dolan, so I said: "It was fine. Coming to have a ginger?"

He agreed and we went off to Grubwell's.

Dolan merely tasted his stone ginger, then commenced again.

"Speaking seriously, old man, Warriner talked a lot of sense this morning. I've made up my mind to speak the whole truth always in future. I thought perhaps you would do the same."

I felt quite angry. "Do you mean to insinuate, Dolan, that I'm a——"

"No, no! What I mean is to speak the whole truth straight out, and not keep anything back like we do sometimes."

I could see Dolan had got another attack, so I finished the ginger-beer and left him.

It was really very annoying of Dolan to talk like he did. His insinuations were unpleasant, and, what was more, untrue. I always do tell the truth. But I was not going to join in any of Dolan's games. I had had quite enough of his "Poor Dumb Animal League" (which is another Dolan story). He carries things too far.

I had quite forgotten about the business next morning. We were taking French again with Warriner, when the first scene occurred. Warriner had given us a piece to prepare the day before, but I had been too busy in prep. the previous evening to attend to it. Of course, Warriner dropped on me to begin.

"Hassall, traduisez la première paragraphe, s'il vous plaît," he said.

I got through the French with only two sarcasms from Warriner, but I knew I was floored when I came to translate. "'The boatman, knowing that—'" and I finished.

"Yes, Hassall, continue."

I couldn't. So I looked at Warriner for a minute in a pathetic manner, and then at the book. "I don't quite understand this next piece, sir. It doesn't seem to make sense in English. I couldn't understand it last night."

This was the truth, because I did glance at it in prep. and saw straight away that it was above me.

"Of course it makes sense, Hassall," Warriner said. "Dolan, you proceed, and Hassall, just attend very carefully to this part."

It was really too funny, that was. Listen to Dolan translate! I did translate four words, but Dolan was floored at the first.

"Go on, Dolan, let us have your translation." said Warriner.

Then Dolan's Truth Crusade commenced.

"I can't translate it sir."

Warriner stared. "Cannot translate? Why not?"

"I have not prepared the piece at all, sir."

"Indeed! How is that? You were in preparation last night. What were you doing?"

Dolan never hesitated. "I was amusing myself, sir."

"*What!*" Warriner got off his chair, and stood up. He was staggered. "What were you doing, Dolan?" he gasped.

"I was amusing myself, sir."

"You dare to tell me that! You were amusing yourself! Do you mean to say you have not prepared the lesson at all?"

"I'VE MADE UP MY MIND TO SPEAK THE WHOLE TRUTH ALWAYS IN FUTURE."

"Yes, sir. I did no preparation last night." Dolan was anxious to be exact.

"But were you amusing yourself all the time? Have you no excuse to make?" Warriner could not believe it yet.

"I am telling the truth, sir. I have no excuse."

Warriner gasped. We smiled

"This is preposterous; I never heard of such a thing!" Warriner walked across the room and back again. "You will write out

a translation of the whole chapter for this day week. If I did not think you had taken leave of your senses, I should treat the matter more seriously. I never heard of such impertinence."

"Yes, sir," said Dolan and sat down. Warriner glared at him again, but said nothing, and the class continued. The piece was a stiff one, and several others failed for various reasons. Gorman had spent too much time at Euclid; Gilmore had devoted the evening to a quiet study of Algebra, while Wilson had become so absorbed in arithmetic as to forget the time altogether. This was quite natural, as Warriner did not take us in mathematics. Others later on confessed that the first portion had taken up all their time. They were very sorry, but it was a rather long piece. Warriner put on one or two of the swots, and the lesson concluded happily.

I sat next to Dolan in prep. that evening, and pointed out to him the folly of his way. He smiled in a superior manner and continued to draw. He was illustrating the front page of his Euclid with a new design—two axes crossed with blades coloured red, supposed to be exact copies of the one used by George Washington. Underneath was written, "Truth, the whole truth." It looked rather well. I was just admiring his drawing, when Denison came behind. Denison was in charge of prep. that week, and he is very fond of strolling round.

"Get on with your work, Hassall," he said. "What are you doing, Dolan?"

"Drawing, sir."

"Indeed! And what are you drawing?"

"Please, sir, it's a design for a book-plate."

"Oh, and this is how you spend your time in preparation, is it?"

"Yes, sir," answered Dolan truthfully.

Denison looked at him sharply, but Dolan was innocent of any attempt to cheek.

"Well, I think you had better have a change and try a little writing. Do me fifty lines for Friday."

Dolan commenced early next day. We were all going to morning school, and it being about the time when pea-shooters were the fashion, several of us indulged in a little practice. Gillibrand of the Sixth was just ahead of us. Being a prefect he wore a cap like a master, and this made an excellent target. Suddenly he turned round. "Who is shooting peas?" he snapped out.

Now, it was a perfectly absurd question to ask. No one was shooting peas. Several had been doing so, but we are very particular about grammar in the Fourth and, therefore, did not reply to Gillibrand. He glared at the crowd for a minute, and was going to continue his stately stalk, when Dolan chirped out:

"Please, Gillibrand, I was."

Gillibrand turned back and took hold of Dolan by the ear. "It was you, was it? What do you mean by it?"

Dolan could not think quickly and it took him some time to decide what the truth was.

"It was only in fun, Gillibrand."

This merely annoyed Gillibrand. "You think it was fun, do you? Come to my room at half-past twelve, and I'll show you something very funny."

When Gillibrand had gone, we told Dolan what we thought of him. We pointed out that if he had said nothing, he would have been quite true to his principles.

"Yes, I know, but"—here Dolan struck the "heroic Washington." attitude—"I am not like you fellows. I tell the truth, and always the truth."

We could not stand that. As many as could lay hold of him, did so, while the others encouraged. Warriner came in and stopped the row, but Dolan was a wreck. His collar was torn, also his tie, and his golden locks (they are red really) were somewhat ruffled. Warriner gave him fifty lines for creating a disturbance, and sent him out to get dressed again.

By the end of the week Dolan was in a bad way. He had broken all records for lines. Denison doubled his dose on Friday because he had not had time to do them. He had got lines from nearly all the prefects for giving cheek, and two of them had licked him. Warriner threatened to report him to the Head; old Schneider, the German master, had given him a dose of verbs to write out, with a promise of various penalties if they were not done in time. Blain, the gym. instructor, had put him on drill for impertinence—Dolan simply told him the truth. We had mobbed him daily for his wickedness. On Sunday night I thought it my duty to remonstrate with him again. It was a case of social suicide, as the papers say.

"You are on the wrong tack altogether, old man," I said in sympathetic tones. I can be very sympathetic at times, and I realised the gravity of the situation. "Speak the truth by all means, but do it tactfully; use a little diplomacy. We all

speak the truth, but you carry it to an extreme; you are simply trying to make a martyr of yourself." I had thought this over, and it struck me as being a rather nice little speech. But Dolan was not impressed by it; he smiled that awful smile of his.

"You don't understand, Hassall. I am going to reform the school before I finish. You will all realise it later, and you will admire me then."

WARRINER CAME IN AND STOPPED THE ROW.

This is the worst feature of Dolan. He gets a craze, and, when trouble comes, instead of learning sense he consoles himself with the thought that all great men have suffered. This is all right, of course; I feel like that myself sometimes, but still—Dolan is an ass.

Monday morning dawned as mornings usually do. But there was not a fellow in the Fourth who did not wish that this morning would break the usual habit and do something else. It was Black-letter day; the day when the Head held the mid-term exam. Dr. Patten, "our respected Head," is a terrible man. He has a nasal twang, an eagle eye, a Wellington nose, and a voice which sends cold shivers down your back every time he speaks. The mid-term exam. is far worse than the Inquisition. There was no larking and no jokes when we went to the class-room that morning. Even the swots were unhappy.

The first hour was passed peacefully in mathematics. It was a written exam., and the Doctor was not present. He was to take us the last two hours in French and history. At length he arrived. The Fourth trembled, and in two minutes the slaughter had commenced. The worst of the Head is that if you answer correctly, he is not satisfied. He asks a harder question, and if that is answered correctly he scowls and says,

"Right! Sit down," as though you had done him a personal injury.

We did fairly well for the first half hour. I answered my first question, but the second floored me. I saw Warriner look at

"I DON'T KNOW, SIR."

me and knew that he would wax sarcastic afterwards, but that did not trouble me. The Doctor said nothing, and seemed satisfied with my performance.

"Dolan," the Head called out, and the Great Reformer stood up.

"Can you tell me the third plural imperfect subjunctive of the verb vouloir?"

We all saw that Dolan was absolutely floored. Still, he might have made a guess, to show he had some idea. But not a bit of it! He paused for a second, and then answered quite frankly, "No, sir."

I expected to see the Head go wild, but he kept quite calm. He asked Dolan another verb just as difficult. Dolan is not a great scholar; he paused for a second before he sorrowfully answered: "I don't know, sir."

The Head looked at Dolan When Patten looks at water, it freezes—at least, that is what is said.

"Have you never learned these verbs?" he asked.

I do admire Dolan's pluck. He answered the Head straight back: "No, sir."

You should have seen the Head gasp then. "What?" and then again he shrieked "*What?*"

Warriner thought it was time to interfere; he stepped up to the Head and spoke to him. When the Doctor spoke next his voice had that hard metallic touch which means danger.

"Mr. Warriner tells me you had both these verbs to prepare last Wednesday. Is that so?"

Poor Dolan looked quite pathetic as he said, "Yes, sir."

The Head blazed again. "Then what do you mean by telling me that you have not learned them?"

"Please, sir, I didn't learn them."

We shook in our shoes for Dolan. We were really sorry for him. The Head glared at Mr. Warriner and then at Dolan. Warriner seemed quite stupefied, and Dolan looked as if he wanted to cry. It took the Head a few minutes to recover himself; when he did speak it was in a tone of mild astonishment.

"I don't quite understand you, Dolan. What did you do in preparation on Wednesday evening?"

"I was drawing book-plates and—and amusing myself, sir."

"What!" The Doctor almost lost his

breath. "You dare—you dare to tell me this! I will see you at twelve-thirty. Come to my room at twelve-thirty. I will know the meaning of this impertinence. Sit down."

The rest of the exam. was scrambled through. Some made mistakes and some answered correctly, but the Head seemed to be in a dream. In history the form did well, but I noticed that Dolan was asked no questions.

I had an opportunity of speaking to Dolan before he went to see the Head.

"Now, old man, be careful," I warned him.

"Thanks, I shall tell the truth," and he went to be interviewed.

He did not appear at dinner. Gilmore and I went up to the study Dolan shared with us, and found him lying on the couch.

"Did you convert the Head, Dolan?" Gilmore asked by way of opening the conversation.

Dolan sat up. "Patten," he said, speaking very slowly, "is a beast."

We agreed. "And Warriner—" I suggested.

"Warriner isn't a beast—he's a pig," which, as you will observe, is real Irish.

"But didn't you tell them about George Washington?"

"Washington!" Dolan snorted. "Washington didn't tell the truth like me. But truth isn't appreciated here, and I'm not going to make a martyr of myself for such a rotten lot."

We left him, but we knew that Dolan was saved. He still tells the truth, but tactfully and gracefully. No one can tell the truth (in a diplomatic manner) better than he can, and he hurts no one's feelings. But his hero is no longer George Washington.

AT SCHOOL.

AT school the great endeavour seems
To get the pupils pat in
Not French or German—O dear no!
But ancient Greek and Latin.
These tongues are taught (to give them tone)
Before they've learnt to *spell* their own!

In modern youth for ancient lore
An interest is kindled;
He soon explains where Tōmi was,
And how old Ovid dwindled—
Tho' quite unable, poor young chap,
To point out Berwick on the map.

The youthful mind is sternly trained
In tricky mathematics.
They give the future business man
Stiff doses of quadratics—
He's apt to get a nasty knock
When face to face with Preference Stock!

And then his youthful brains are stuffed
With history, and addled
With doubtful tales of King Canute—
Viz., how that sportsman paddled.
They take great care to teach our sons
How "good" King Alfred burnt the buns.

They love to tell of crafty John
Whose reign was scarcely sinless;
Of some old King who lost a son—
And from that date was grinless.
Strange not to teach, it seems to me
What one day *will be* history!

R. C. THARP.

Bullfinches.—I am glad to learn that S. Castle-Smith's (Kenley) bullfinches have thrived well on the treatment I recommended for them some time ago. I cannot give the address of a German firm from which a bird-organ could be obtained; but I should imagine that one of the better-class bird-dealers, such as Green's Aviaries, Covent Garden, would get one to order. I have no experience of training Bullfinches "to pipe tunes after the German method," but I am afraid my correspondent has left the course of teaching till too late: the Germans begin it long before the birds commence to whistle—when they are only about a fortnight old, in fact. In crossing, I believe it is usual for the Bullfinch to be a hen bird and the canary a cock. Canary-seed was not mentioned, because it is not considered a good food for these birds; but a little may be given to breeding birds in spring.

Curing Skins.—John Nightingale (Chester) asks for a recipe for curing rabbit skins, and would like it sent direct. It is only in quite special cases that I answer direct, and I do not undertake to do so in any case. In this matter J. N. could have got the required information at once by looking through a few back numbers of THE CAPTAIN for we gave instructions for preserving skins in this Corner not many months ago. The O. F.'s regulations discourage repetitions of these answers, so I must ask my correspondent to look up the previous reply.

Aviary.—W. G. Hay (Oakley Sq., N.W.) proposes to construct an aviary in his garden, and sends me a plan with details for my opinion. The position, facing south-west and backed by a wall, is good, and the general arrangement satisfactory; but there is no provision for a roosting-house. The length (15 ft.) is suitable, but the depth from back to front (3 or 4 feet) should be doubled. There will almost certainly be trouble with rats or mice, though my correspondent has not hitherto seen any of these creatures about, and steps must be taken to exclude them whenever there is a chance of their tunnelling under. For the same reason the perches must be suspended from the roof. Wagtails and moorhens would, I fear, be found unsuitable occupants on account of the animal nature of their food, which is not easily obtained in London, especially in winter. The wire netting should not exceed ½ inch in mesh. The ivy would not be a disadvantage; rather the reverse. The pond W. G. Hay mentions would not be deep enough for the purposes he has in view. If he will invest a shilling in Greene's "Popular Parrakeets" (Upcott Gill), my correspondent will find in the introduction some most valuable hints on aviary construction by a breeder of great experience. By the way, some of the birds described in the same book—such as budgerigars and cockatiels—will prove far more satisfactory inmates than some of the birds W. G. Hay names. I never recommend dealers; that would not be fair. Names are sometimes given of business firms where the things desired can be obtained, but this is not to be taken as a recommendation. In the case of bird-dealers and London correspondents, even this is quite unnecessary, for every quarter of London has its bird-shops, where one can see what one is buying.

Puss-Moth.—D. H. MacLay (Deal) acknow-

THE PUSS-MOTH.

ledges much help about moths and flowers from reading this Corner and my books, and sends a photo. of the Puss-moth, which I reproduce herewith. He says the insect "was bred from an egg, and I photographed it about twelve hours after it came out"—a necessary interval to allow its wings fully to expand. From the position of the forewings, the moth appears to have been already killed, but D. H. M. has avoided the mistake of pinning it. The left forewing is not so well in focus as the right. But for that the photograph would be a very good one.

Names of Plants.—Miss S. Sykes (Atherstone, Warwickshire) sends me three dried plants, with particulars of the localities where they were found, &c., and asks for their names. No. 1 is the Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*); No. 2 the Lesser Dodder (*Cuscuta epithymum*); No. 3 the Lesser Water Plantain (*Alisma ranunculoides*). With regard to No 1,

BOG ASPHODEL.

what Miss Sykes took for closed flowers are really seed-vessels. No. 2, she says, has no flowers, but really all that can be seen in the dry specimen are clusters of the small flowers. It is a thread-like parasite twisting about the branches of furze, and if the next time my correspondent finds it she will examine the thick clusters with a lens she will see they are made up of a number of little bell-shaped blossoms. No. 3 is rather scrappy for identification, but I have little doubt it is the species named above. No, we do not ask for coupons or stamps for this Corner; we only stipulate that inquirers shall be moderate in their demands, and shall send us adequate materials upon which to work.—H. J. White (Rugby), who also sends three specimens to be named, sets me a more puzzling task, for these are mere twigs of foreign coniferous trees, and only one of them bears cones. The number of these trees that have been introduced into British parks and plantations is so great that it is very difficult to determine species without seeing the tree, or at least having more material than H. J. W. is able to send me. I have done my best with it, but would not like to say I am absolutely sure as to the correctness of my identification. No. 1 appears to be the Californian Incense Cedar (*Libocedrus decurrens*), a native of Oregon and California; No. 2 (with cones) Prince Albert's Fir (*Tsuga albertiana*), from California and British Columbia; No. 3 the Santa Lucia Fir (*Abies bracteata*), from South California.

LESSER DODDER.

LESSER WATER PLANTAIN.

Bird Queries.—R. C. A. (Rosscarbery, co. Cork) sends the remains of a bird, much mutilated by shot, and asks for its name. He says, "It seems to me to have the appearance of both Tom Tit and Wagtail, but is not either." Specimens for identification, as I have frequently insisted, should be complete and fresh as possible, to avoid errors; but I do not think there can be any doubt that my correspondent's enclosure is the Long-tailed Tit.—H. West (Leek) sends for identification an addled egg, which has burst since he found it last May. (I wonder if the O. F. realises what I have to put up with from these remains in various stages of highness!) The changes set up by the decomposition of an unblown egg affect its colour as a rule to an extent that makes identification untrustworthy. But with the description H. West is enabled to give me of the bird and its nest, I think I can safely pronounce the egg to be that of the Wheatear. Can I say if the egg is rare and worth much? The egg is not rare, though it cannot be classed with the commonest sorts, but no egg that has been put into the cabinet and allowed to blow itself has any value.—F. W. Holder (Southport) wants "a standard book on British Birds and their eggs; also the price." Books of this

kind are necessarily expensive, and F. W. H. gives me no clue as to what would be within his means Howard Saunders' "Manual of British Birds" (Jackson and Gurney, 21*s.*) gives figures of all the species, with clear descriptions, but the eggs are not shown. The best cheap book on the eggs with figures is Canon Atkinson's "British Birds' Eggs and Nests" (Routledge, 1*s.* plain, 3*s.* 6*d.* coloured).

Long-haired Cat.—S. Pentelow (Huntingdon) wants advice respecting a valuable long-haired kitten whose coat is "always getting matted up with fat of some sort." Combing and brushing have proved ineffectual. The kitten must be washed before combing. Fuller's earth must be liberally used with good yellow soap, which ingredients should be dissolved in a little hot water and added to a sufficiently warm bath in which the kitten should be held whilst the fur is thoroughly well worked from head to tail. When the fur appears to be quite freed from dirt, the patient should be transferred to a vessel of clean warm water in which all the soapy mixture should be well washed out by a similar manipulation. The kitten should be dried with soft towels in front of a fire, and the fur then carefully combed out, when, if the washing has been thorough, all the matted tufts will come loose. The kitten should be kept warm until thoroughly dry.

A REINDEER AT THE LONDON ZOO.
Photo. W. P. Dando F.Z.S., Woodbury Company.

THE SECOND PANTHER.

By J. DOUGALL REID.

Illustrated by John De Walton.

IT happened simply enough. Private Macrae's company was out "cholera dodging"—quitting the regular quarters in cantonments and moving about in the open by way of shaking off the infection—and had halted one afternoon in a tract of broken and densely wooded country. The camp had been set up on the bank of a sluggish, and, at that season, greatly shrunken stream that came crawling across the parched levels like an exhausted serpent. And as several bands of jungle-wallahs, or outlaws, were known to be in the neighbourhood, the camp guard had been strengthened by half a dozen patrol, or "flying," sentries. Of these sentries was Macrae, and about midnight he left the guard tent to search for objects of legitimate suspicion.

On this occasion he went much farther up the stream than when on his previous round, and so came to a point from which he could see what looked like the ruins of a palace, or temple, on the other side of the river; a building immediately surrounded by low trees and standing in the centre of what had at one time been extensive gardens, but which were now only bare, brown spaces, heavily invaded by encroaching jungle growths. Here and there the fantastic outline of a broken fountain, or the raised edge of a marble tank, glimmered in the beams of the moon, but in all else the once gay gardens had merged themselves in the surrounding wilderness, while desolation's very self seemed to have descended upon the central pile that stood outlined so sharply against the black forset wall beyond.

Staring idly at the ruins, there came back to Macrae's recollection the part he had taken once in storming a somewhat similar place, and how, after the fight was over, he and his fellows had found about a waggon-load of valuable loot hidden under the floor of the great central hall. This incident had led him to associate ideas of treasure trove with every ruin he saw, and it was that mental association which was now urging him to cross the river and do a little exploring for his own strictly personal satisfaction. The extreme unlikelihood of anything of value, that was at all portable, being allowed to remain in such a place with so many native thieves about, he simply did not think of. Nor did it occur to him that he would probably find more trouble than treasure in the course of his hunt. He wanted to visit that ruin, and meant to have his way.

But how to get over? Scanning the course of the stream both above and below where he stood, he at length succeeded in locating a spot at which, as it appeared to him, a crossing might be effected by an active man. This was where, from under a steeply shelving bank, a reef, or ledge, of rock ran obliquely across the course of the stream. During the rainy season the whole ridge would doubtless be deeply covered, but just then an irregular line of flat or roughly rounded heads of rock arose above the surface, offering a risky but still practicable path, and one that, after some little hesitation, he resolved to take.

With several minor slips, and at least one narrow escape from a plunge in the river, he reached what was almost the end of the ledge, there to find, however, the biggest and ugliest jump of all confronting him. The take off was the round knob of rock upon which he stood, and that offered little or no grip for his feet, while the landing-place was a great flat stone that sloped steeply down into the water and was covered all over with dried slime of an olive-green colour. And between lay six or seven feet of scarcely moving black water, repulsive enough in itself, even if he had not known that the river swarmed with muggars, as the gavials or Indian crocodiles are called by the British soldiers.

While he stood surveying the big jump and nerving himself to attempt it, a slight sound, like a half-suppressed cough, made him look behind him—and next second, uttering a startled shout, he had leaped sheer out towards the flat stone on the river bank.

He landed squarely, slipped, stumbled, and fell on his knees, but instantly recovering

HE LEAPED SHEER OUT TOWARDS THE FLAT STONE ON THE RIVER BANK.

himself, rushed up the bank and gained the level ground above. There he turned and swung up his clubbed rifle—just as a long, lean, yellowish body fell through the air upon the rock he had just quitted, and crouched at once for a fresh spring.

No need to ask what it was. With the very first glance he knew that he was face to face with one of the most ferocious and dangerous brutes in all the jungle. His antagonist was a black panther—so named from its markings—and its action in following him across the river placed its murderous intention beyond doubt.

All this was rather felt than thought by Macrae, so little time had he in his predicament either to think or act, for without the loss of a second the fierce beast sprang again, this time accompanying its onset with a snarling yell that made the windless air tingle. As the animal rose towards him, all blazing eyes and gleaming fangs, the sinewy Highlander made the rifle-butt whistle circling round his head, and then brought it down on the nearing skull like a sledge-hammer. He heard the mechanism of the breech snap and jingle like breaking glass under the tremendous impact of the blow, but the stout stock held bravely, and its iron-shod butt smashed the panther's head as a spoon cracks an egg. Feebly clawing the air, it rolled down the bank into the water and sank, only a few crimson bubbles on the surface and a blotch of blood on the rock remaining to tell that it had been there.

While Macrae stood recovering his breath, he busied himself trying to find a reason for the very singular action of the panther. Unless provoked, these animals do not, as a rule, attack man, and although man-eaters are not wholly unknown among them, such instances are very rare. Had he known then what he learned afterwards, that the panther he had slain had a den, a mate, and a couple of month-old whelps in the immediate vicinity of the ruins, he would have understood it all, even to the reason for both the parent brutes being abroad after nightfall, which reason may be given in one word—water. When cubs are in evidence, the female seldom leaves them during the first month or two, and then only for water, and during the day, the den being less likely to be invaded then than at night by hungry and prowling enemies. As for the male, at such periods he is seldom in the den at all for any time worth mentioning. He has to hunt for two both by day and night, and sleep where he can.

Ignorant as yet of all this, Macrae found the solution of the problem a little beyond him, and began to turn his attention to other and more urgent matters. The panther he had killed was a female, and if, as was probable, she had a mate about, the sooner he got back to camp the better. That blood on the stone, or rather the scent of it, would give the recent killing away, and then—well, a fiend from the pit would be a less terrible antagonist than that particular panther.

Realising that he could not return by the way he had come, he resolved to go down the bank till he reached a point opposite the camp where he could receive aid in recrossing the river. And as his rifle was now useless for shooting, he drew and fixed his bayonet ere quitting the scene of the recent decisive encounter.

He had scarcely more than started when his eyes fell upon the ruined palace, which he had in the interval forgotten. Most men in his position would have continued to forget, or at least ignore, the ruins, but he did not look at it in that way. He had crossed the river to inspect those ruins, and with the mingling of slow obstinacy and reckless courage characteristic of the man, he resolved to carry out his original intention and take the risk.

Strangely weird, uncanny, forlorn, the desolated pile looked in the flooding light of the tropic moon. The walls, built of light-coloured stone, towered up white and spectral in the wan radiance, while the utter absence of sound or sign of life in it deepened the ghostly atmosphere that hung over the whole evil place. There was no wind, not even a breath, to nod the tall grasses or stir the heavily hanging leaves of the trees, and the only sound heard, other than the dull gurgle and lap of the shrunken river, was that faint, far-off whispering and moaning that fills the jungle at night with an atmosphere of awe, even terror.

Passing under the broken arch of what had once been the main gateway, Macrae traversed courts and passages innumerable, all dimly dark or at best only faintly lit by fitful shimmers of moonlight falling through rents and cracks in the crumbling masonry. As for sounds, none save the hollow echoes of his own footfalls kept him company, although now and again a bat flitted noiselessly past overhead, or a snake glided across a patch of moonlight on the floor.

At length he reached the innermost court of all, and while poking about in it began to

IT CAUGHT AT AND OVERTURNED THE IDOL.'

realise the rashness and folly of his action in wandering about such a place, at such a time, practically unarmed, seeking he knew not what, and with . . .

The sound he had heard was very faint, but as he stood listening it came again, and this time it was much nearer. It was a broken, whimpering half-scream; the call, he knew, of the black panther—and it came from the direction of the river.

Thoroughly alive now to the folly that had put him in such peril, Macrae glanced swiftly around in search of some place of vantage that would secure him against being attacked from behind in the coming fight, for that a fight was now inevitable he knew. From one wall of the court a series of broken steps projected, the remains of a stairway the outer supports of which had fallen away. These steps, though confessing a gap here and there, ran right up to a square exit giving on to the palace roof, but their point of attraction for Macrae was that at a height of ten or twelve feet from the floor they ran past a deep recess, in the mouth or entrance of which sat, cross-legged, a huge idol.

"The very place," he muttered, and made for the stair at once, scrambling upward at a speed that showed how completely he apprehended the danger threatening him. And even as he went, there burst through the silence a new cry—a sound so full of brute madness and wrath as to assure him instantly that the panther had found the blood on the stone by the river's edge. His face grew very grim as he reached the recess and took up a position behind the idol, with his rifle thrown forward, spear fashion.

Stout-hearted though he was, the interval of waiting that followed tried his nerves severely. There had been no repetition of that fiendish shrieking from the river, and the silence remained unbroken till a faint rattling noise, like that made by small stones falling from a slight elevation, reached his ear. He tightened his grasp on the rifle, keeping his eyes fixed on a low archway at the other side of the court, from which the sound had seemed to come.

Suddenly, and just as he began to feel as though he were being mesmerised, there shone out of the darkness under the arch two balls of fire, lambent, greenish, glaring; and he had no more than observed them before the panther launched itself straight at him, splitting the air the while with its hideous scream. He saw the lithe, tawny body flash across the moonlit patches on the floor; saw it rise from that floor like a slung stone till it clutched and clung, half in, half out, of the recess. In its desperate efforts to make good its footing, however, it directly frustrated its own intention, as it caught at and overturned the idol, precipitating both to the floor of the hall, itself underneath.

As they fell, Macrae shook off the stupor of amazement created by the preternatural fury of the attack, and sprang forward to hold the top of the stair. The beast, he saw, was a full-grown male, not at all likely to be daunted by the blow of the falling idol, heavy though the latter was. Nor was he mistaken, for the furious brute was not checked for so much as an instant, but with a savage yell and shake of the head, came up the stair like a whirlwind. Had the latter run straight out, the weight and impetus of the panther's charge must have carried it into the recess, despite opposition, but as it was, it had to slow down at the angle, and seizing the advantage thus offered, Macrae lunged savagely at it, striking it on the shoulder. The keen, double-edged blade struck a bone and glanced upward, tearing a deep gash and throwing the panther over into the court.

First round for the man. But the relief was only transient, for in even less time than before the fierce and raging beast was back; on this occasion gaining the recess itself in spite of several deep wounds inflicted by the now dripping bayonet. It was only when, clubbing his rifle as the beast reared up at him, he dealt it a stunning blow on the head that the desperately fighting Highlander won the second round in that terrible duel. But he had not gone scatheless. The steel-like claws had found his left forearm and shoulder, while the snapping fangs had come only too close to his right thigh, cutting like knives. He could feel the blood soaking and spreading all round the wounds, as with the labouring breath hissing through his clenched teeth he braced himself to meet the next attack.

That came at a longer interval, as also reduced speed, both showing that loss of blood was telling on the panther's strength. Yet its courage and ferocity were in no way lessened as it again ascended and strove to close with its equally exhausted foe.

A fierce struggle ensued—one productive of added wounds to both, and that ended in both losing their footing on the slippery stair-top and rolling down the steps, struggling hideously. How Macrae got clear at the bottom he could never afterwards tell, but get clear he did, and, staggering to his feet, dealt what he felt was his final thrust at the unconquerable beast half-stumbling, half-crawling towards him. Driven home with the last strength of desperation, the long, keen blade struck and sank. But the panther reared up against the bayonet, and as Macrae strained on the butt, a furious blow fell on his wounded arm, snapping it like a twig. Then, with the rifle gripped hard in his right hand, he tottered backwards and fell.

When his senses returned he found himself lying on the floor of the court. The panther was stretched a few yards off, plainly near its end. It lay with its head on its fore-paws, watching him, and the moonlight revealed to the startled soldier a thing that haunted him for many a day—the look of solemn wonder, of patient questioning, in its eyes. Then its sinews relaxed, a strong shudder shook it horribly, and the brave, fierce rover of the jungle was dead.

Macrae had had a very narrow escape indeed, and was three months in hospital over it, the result of losing pretty nearly all the blood he had in his body before the search-party found him. But it cured him, and that thoroughly, of his craze for treasure-seeking among ruins.

EARL ROBERTS OF KANDAHAR, PRETORIA, AND WATERFORD.
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Peers and Their Peculiarities.

By "SCRIPTOR."

THE House of Lords, which has been described by Lord Campbell as "a place in which you feel you are addressing dead men by torchlight," and more recently by Viscount Goschen as "a place, like the land of the lotus-eaters, where it is always afternoon"—their lordships seldom sit more than two hours—has many virtues, and its members many peculiarities. It will, for instance, take a holiday on the slightest provocation. Of its members, many never attend; of those who come, few say anything; of those who say anything, few say much; and of that which is said, very little can be heard owing to the defective acoustic properties of the chamber.

A sartorial critic would describe the Upper House as a well-dressed assembly. An atmosphere of superiority pervades the entire chamber. Every attitude is an attitude of repose, and every one seems perfectly at ease and well satisfied with himself. Of course, the dull uniformity of aristocratic manner is here and there relieved by such touches of individuality as are bound to show themselves in every assembly of cultured men.

The late Lord Salisbury, for instance, directly he entered the House, had what a Scotsman would call a brief "crack" with the Lord Chancellor, and the laughter which invariably ensued when Lord Salisbury took a seat for a few moments on the Woolsack alongside Lord Halsbury would seem to show that convivial stories rather than matters of moment connected with the State were discussed. At any rate, it was the tradition of the House that Lord Halsbury always had the advantage of hearing from the then Prime Minister "the very latest."

This brief conversation over, it was the invariable custom of Lord Salisbury to take his seat on the Government Bench, place his hat beside him, insert in that hat his somewhat massive "fist," and give the golgotha a number of twirling motions from right to left. Later on, lifting up his piece of headgear, he seemed somewhat surprised to find that its appearance gave the idea that it had been ironed the wrong way.

Lord Loreburn, the present occupant of the Woolsack, makes a most impressive and dignified Lord Chancellor, and has already become extremely popular with peers on both sides of the House. He has on more than one occasion taken part in their Lordships' deliberations and given remarkable proof of his powers as a debater. The story goes that the Lord Chancellor, then Sir Robert Reid, took a prolonged

THE LATE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY.
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promenade in the metropolis on Mafeking night with another "limb of the law" who has since entered the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade. The frequent "tickler" used by the crowds reduced Sir Robert to a state bordering on fury, but Mr. Lloyd-George boyishly enjoyed the fun.

The Leader of the House of Lords—the Marquess of Ripon—looks back, as no other living

VISCOUNT KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM.
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peer can, upon more than fifty years of public life as a consistent Radical. He preached co-operation to the masses before the Stores converted the classes; and his advocacy of Home Rule is not due to his religious sympathies, for it is notorious that the Duke of Norfolk and other Roman Catholics are its most active foes. The Marquess of Ripon has a good many smiles left in him yet. He can smile when he thinks of the predictions of England's downfall he heard during the old debates on Parliamentary reform, and when he recalls the threats that India must be lost to us because he himself, as Viceroy, returned the salutes of natives in the streets of Calcutta and did not exclude their lawyers from the Bench.

The Duke of Devonshire is a man of the most melancholy behaviour. He is never known to smile, and sits through the breeziest afternoon chin on chest, and hat well pulled down over his face. The "bobbies" at the Palace of Westminster mark him out as the only peer who does not return their respectful salute.

Lord Lansdowne, by-the-bye, has not only a salute, but a smile, for Robert, and he has been known to bestow upon the humble policeman such tokens of favour as have made the latter's lot for the moment a completely happy one.

The young Duke of Marlborough has, in spite of a somewhat weak appearance, a ringing voice, and conveys the idea of much-suppressed virility.

The Duke of Bedford is, perhaps, the fastest speaker, his rate of delivery being approximate to two hundred words a minute.

If it is not irreverent to say so, the bishops may be compared to those chorus girls in comic opera who have only to look their part. It is not often that the ecclesiastical members of the House interfere in debate. Last session was quite an exception in this matter. Arrayed in lawn sleeves, they occupy a bench to themselves on the right of the throne, look picturesque, and say but little save when the debate concerns them closely. The late Dr. Perowne's predecessor in the bishoprick of Worcester, Dr. Phillpotts—uncle of the novelist—only attended the House to vote on the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill.

Jack Falstaff was horrified at the idea that he should be suspected of raising his hand against the Heir-Apparent. The Earl of Wemyss may be described as a man who ought to feel pangs of remorse in that he almost assailed with his fist no less a personage than King Edward VII. Lord Wemyss is one of the most picturesque figures and eloquent debaters in the House of Lords, and his pet themes are the Militia ballot and the rights of property.

On one occasion during the session of 1890, his Majesty—then Prince of Wales—was seated right in front of Lord Wemyss on the cross benches, and the proximity now and then was embarrassing. Lord Wemyss has the fine, free gesticulation of a man of an earlier,

robuster, and more historical period; and on the night in question, when he was describing the advantages of the ballot with what Barrie would call "rocking arms," he inadvertently struck, with a sweep of his arm, the tall hat of the King. There was a general titter, and Lord Wemyss courteously, and with the fine grand manner of the courtly noble, tendered his apologies, which, needless to say, were accepted with that grace which is the distinguishing characteristic of our Sovereign.

BARON LOREBURN.
By permission of *Vanity Fair*.

Such little incidents in the life of the House of Lords are by no means uncommon. It is a popular delusion that the House of Lords is always deadly dull. I cannot, from the sheer exigencies of space, recite here all the celebrated scenes which have taken place in that historic chamber, but only two interesting incidents which have, to use Shelley's phrase, come within my own ken.

I well remember the great night in March 1898, when Lord Roberts made his famous speech as to the best and wisest policy to adopt in regard to our relations with the tribes on the North-West Frontier of India.

The advice given by one who spoke with authority as to the real secret of oratory, "have something to say, say it, and sit down," was certainly followed by gallant "Bobs." Speaking without a single note, and with his mind full of his subject, he delivered a speech which rose to the dignity of an oration, so full was it of fact, point and pith, and so thoroughly did he convince his hearers of his sincerity.

It was splendid to see the hero of a hundred fights addressing the nobility of England on a subject of such vital moment at that time, and even now, to the welfare of the Empire at large.

Another soldier, whose name is writ large in modern English history, has also engrossed his title in capitals on the roll of their Lordship's House. I happened to be in the chamber when Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, in scarlet and ermine, took the oath on his elevation to the peerage.

I noticed that the motion of his arm as he wielded the quill had something about it as though he were flourishing his sword, and I had the curiosity afterwards to glance at the roll to see the result. The signature ran right across the scroll, and it is, perhaps, the largest and boldest signature appearing thereon.

The serenity of the House of Lords was broken recently by a peer dropping off to sleep and snoring loudly. This is an incident not without precedent. Many years ago the predecessor of the present Duke of Norfolk was sound asleep in the Gilded Chamber and peacefully snoring when a Bill was brought up from the House of Commons. "This, my lords," said the Lord Chancellor, "is a Bill relating to Great Snoring"—and the noble and learned Lord put immense emphasis on "Great Snoring"—"to which the Commons desire your Lordships' concurrence." The loud laughter of the peers woke the Duke of Norfolk from his slumber, and when, on inquiry, he was told that the object of the measure was to enclose the commons of Great Snoring—a parish in Norfolk—he guessed the reason for the mirth and joined in it heartily.

Nervousness among young peers is by no means uncommon, and in recent years Lord Lovat, whose great service during the South African War in raising and commanding, with

distinguished success, the corps known as Lovat's Scouts, will long be remembered; and Lord Dundonald, grandson of the fine old warrior who fought Napoleon, and who himself had the honour of riding into Ladysmith at the head of Buller's army, have both been compelled to resume their seats without being able to complete the observations they rose to make.

"My lords," said a noble earl who shall be nameless, rising many decades ago to make his maiden speech, "my lords, I rise for the first time—the very first time. My lords, I divide my speech into four branches." Here there was an embarrassing pause of some seconds. "My lords," the noble earl then ejaculated, "if ever I rise again in this House, you may cut me off root and branches and all for ever."

A singular breach of decorum was committed in the House of Lords during the last few months that Lord Selborne was at the Admiralty.

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.
By permission of *Vanity Fair*.

THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE.
By permission of *Vanity Fair*.

The First Lord had just concluded an impressive peroration which apparently appealed directly to the sensibilities of Lord Brassey, for that noble lord, having brought with him some slight touch of Colonial warmth, applauded the sentiments of the First Lord of the Admiralty, not only with the orthodox "Hear, hear," but with loud hand-clapping. I shall never forget the look of horror which showed itself on the face of Earl Spencer, who, clutching Lord Brassey by the arm, brought him back to a due sense of the undemonstrative atmosphere of the Upper Chamber.

During the same sitting Lord Heneage wound up a flowery peroration by sitting down on his hat.

Seeing a member of the House of Lords in his place, to all intents and purposes but a counterpart, in many respects, of his brother peers—speaking, voting and acting in an almost automatic manner—one would never suppose that outside the Gilded Chamber each

LORD STANLEY.
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one is marked by a strong individuality, and has pursuits, pleasures, and characteristics of a most unique kind.

A gipsy caravan, for instance, is the last place in the world in which one would expect to find a peer of the realm. Yet the late Duke of Bedford often spent months together travelling from place to place in what he termed his "land yacht." The Duke of Newcastle used at one time to be an enthusiastic amateur "caravanist," and the late Duke of Portland had two or three vans specially designed and built for him, the cheapest costing over £600. Unique among pleasure caravans was that in which Lord James of Hereford was a frequent traveller and resident.

Everybody knows that in the House of Commons there constantly occur quaint figures of speech, curious comparisons, slips of the tongue, and "bulls" galore. Not often are such things noted in the House of Lords, but still, they constantly occur there.

One of the most famous "bulls" of recent years was that made by the Marquis of Londonderry during the discussion on the second reading of the Irish Land Bill of 1896. "This," he declared, with great vehemence of gesture, "is the keystone of the Bill. Are you going to kill it?"

In the course of the same speech he threw the House into roars of laughter by stating that "this is the reason why you have failed to settle the Irish land question in the future as you have done in the past."

Noble lords sometimes enliven debates by appealing to the sight as well as the hearing of Parliament. When Lord Stanley was carrying the Pistols Bill, he illustrated his argument by pointing a cheap revolver at members opposite; and on another occasion Lord Playfair handed round pots of oleomargarine for members to smell and taste.

It is the usual thing for noble lords engaged on Committees to fortify themselves for an arduous day's work by a semi-surreptitious

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY.
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"pull" at a flask, or more open recourse to sherry and sandwiches.

Very few people who daily eat sandwiches are aware that it is to an ancestor of the Earl of Sandwich that this popular form of food owes its name. The story runs that the Earl in question was very fond of playing cards, and in order to prevent having to stop to eat he used to have a slice of meat put between two slices of bread, which he consumed as he played. This got to be called a "sandwich," but gradually the inverted commas were dropped as the word became an accepted one in the language.

The venerable Lord Brampton, beneath which title Mr. Justice Hawkins hides his identity in these days, ever had a passionate love for dumb animals, from horses and dogs to pet birds, and in his room at the House of Lords, where until the last two or three years he was a regular attendant, he kept a bag of maize wherewith to feed the pigeons which make the Palace of Westminster their home.

If you want a peerage, don't get married! It is recognised as a very sound qualification for a peerage to be a confirmed bachelor, or, being married, to be childless. To all intents and purposes the honour is in these cases a life-peerage, and such cases have of late years been in great favour in high quarters.

There are some offices which are traditional stepping-stones to the peerage. A retiring Speaker, for instance, is always made a viscount. A Chief Whip may always, if he chooses, end up in the House of Lords. Any man who has once been in the Cabinet, or near it, but who, for any reason, does not continue in office, is generally given the refusal of nobility. The process is flippantly known as being "kicked upstairs."

THE PIRATE.

IT was a desperate pirate
Who slouched upon the shore,
(It's called the Strand); I've often seen
The rascal there before.

His clothes, I can't describe them,
They weren't what you'd expect;
He wore no pistols in his belt,
Or none I could detect.

No cutlass dangled at his side:
I noticed at a glance
He didn't look the least bit like
"The Pirates of Penzance."

And yet he had as cutthroat look
As any one I've seen;
Perchance the last of Morgan's crew—
At least, he might have been;

But then it was but yesterday
I passed this ruffian by,
And Morgan's dead so long, our friend
Could prove an *alibi*.

Besides, although the cunning rogue
No doubt was doing wrong;
His ship's but "hardship," and his trade
The piracy of song.

He carries cargo, contraband,
Good current notes (of sound);
The only "high seas" that *he* knows
In music may be found.

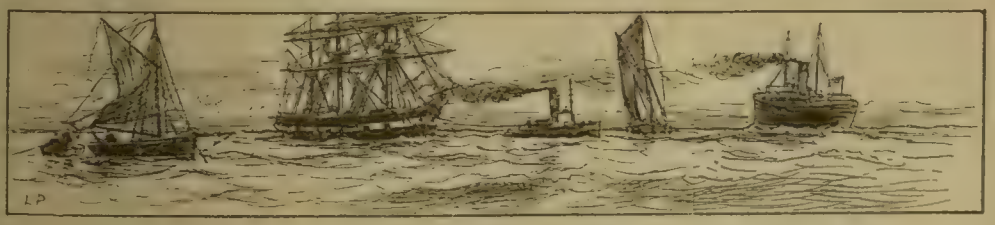
"Pieces of eight" he never saw,
Or yet a gold "doubloon;"
Your "twopences" are all *he* seeks;
(They'll give him two months—soon).

He doesn't sail "the Spanish main,"
It's not our pirate's game;
(A Spanish onion's more his "marque,"
Which isn't quite the same.)

No "long Tom" e'er could wrong him
Like "Bobbies" on their beat;
And when these deadly foes "give chase"
He "scuttles"—up the street.

Such foes were made to "walk the plank"
In days of long ago;
A plank-bed is the only plank
This pirate's like to know!

REGINALD RIGBY.



STORIES OF STOWAWAYS.

By ANDREW HENRY LOWE.

IV.

THE "MIRANDA" MYSTERY.

"WHAT is the matter?" "What has gone wrong?" "Why are we stopping again?"

Such were the questions which ran from stem to stern of the ss. *Miranda*.

They were asked by the Chief Officer, who, with his men, had been absorbed on the fo'c'sle head in the important task of catting the newly weighed anchor. They were asked by the engineers on watch down in the heart of the ship, and by the stokers who had been strenuously feeding the glowing furnaces to give the vessel a good head of steam for a buoyant start on her long voyage. They were asked by the stewards who were setting the tables for luncheon in the saloon, and they were asked by the hundreds of passengers promenading the decks and taking their last close view of land for a season.

Why was the *Miranda* stopping so soon after cutting her last connection with land on this side of the Atlantic?

Her final port of call had been touched at; the tender from the shore had hove alongside; passengers, mails and baggage had been embarked; and, giving an extra fillip to the animated scene, a pack of fox-hounds—bound for sport in a distant country — had sprawled, yelping and affrighted, up the slippery gangway, wondering at their new and strange surroundings.

The Agent and the various Government officials, after going below to despatch business and drink "a prosperous voyage," had taken their departure, and the little vessel conveying them had hauled away, amidst ringing cheers from those on the huge liner. Everything on the *Miranda* had quieted down again. The telegraph sang "Full speed ahead." There was a sigh of relief, and all was over.

She was fairly off on her far seabound journey. And lo! she had barely got good way on, when she was stopping again, much to the surprise and curiosity of the large number of people who made up her little world.

On board ship it does not take much to make an event, and here was one quite unlooked for, and coming, too, so soon after a commotion that had so pleasantly broken in upon the monotony of marine life.

Had some important passenger or mail bag been left behind? This last query was suggested by the fact that the Captain and the Third Officer—both lieutenants of the Royal Naval Reserve—had turned their glasses in the direction of the coastguard station, from whose flag-staff there hung a stream of bunting. Yes; it was a signal.

Something unexpected had occurred at the last moment, and it must be a very grave affair to necessitate the stopping of a royal mail steamship, which, like an express train, once officially despatched, is bound to proceed swiftly on her way, and not to be hindered by lesser impediments than the inevitable accidents of the sea.

Ah! The tender is putting out again and drawing near. She, too, has a signal flying.

The wonder of those on the *Miranda* is now intense. Even the Captain is a victim of it, if a calm one, as behoves the attitude of the chief magistrate of a floating kingdom.

THE PASSENGERS WERE PASSED, IN SINGLE FILE, UP ON DECK.

The Agent has come back, wearing a serious look. The officials are there also, but they have more the aspect of interested spectators than of men personally concerned in what is going on.

The purser—quiet but alert—now emerges from his office on the promenade deck. He has been too much engrossed in piles of despatches to bother about outside events, but the tooting of the tender has reached him.

After a few words, he and the Agent and a newcomer from the shore—a man of strong, smooth countenance and piercing eye—repair to the bridge, and, accompanied by the Captain, enter the chart-room.

In a few minutes they re-appear, and in stentorian tones the Commander shouts out an order to the Chief Officer, still expectantly waiting on the fo'c'sle head:

"Let go your anchor, Mr. Smith; give her forty-five fathoms."

"Ay, ay, sir; forty-five fathoms it is," comes back the ringing response, and the heavy cable rattles out.

The Purser sends for the Chief Steward.

"Mr. Bremner, muster your men, please, and tell them to ask all the passengers to go to their several quarters. And have them kept there. We're going to have an inspection, and not a soul must be missed. Post hands at the companions, and allow no one to pass till we come along."

"And let them be lively about it," added the Captain, who looked annoyed, as though the matter in hand were little to his liking.

Then came a time of ordering, pushing, scrambling, and growling; all being more anxious to know the reason of than to comply with the request. But the decks were soon cleared.

Meantime, the Captain, Purser, Agent, and the sharp-visaged stranger conversed earnestly in a group apart. It was surely something momentous and private, for no one else was allowed to share their counsels, not even the ship's surgeon, who stood by the ship's rail with a puzzled look on his face.

"The Chief Steward's compliments, sir. And the passengers are now all in their places," was announced to the quartette standing near the door of the chartroom.

"All right; go ahead, Mr. Anson," said the Captain to the Purser. "You don't need

me. I hope"—to the keen-eyed person—"that you may be successful. I'll get the Fourth Officer to post the sailors and have ropes stretched to keep them grouped together till you are quite satisfied. Of course, I'm anxious to start as soon as possible, but everything that lies in our power must be done for his lordship."

"Will you take another look?" said the detective—for such he was—as he handed to Mr. Anson a photograph that had already been passed round amongst those in the secret. Then the Purser, the Agent and he went off to investigate.

Beginning forward, the passengers were passed, in single file, up on deck, every face being closely scanned by the eager searchers. In this fashion, every group in the steerage, the second cabin and the saloon, was examined, but without result.

Next, the crew were mustered and inspected, and the accommodation was peered into. Not a likely corner where any one could be concealed was overlooked, but the person wanted was not found, and it was with a baffled look that the detective rejoined the Captain, the others following him.

"It is very strange," said the detective, who was a man of superior intelligence and great experience.

"Are you quite certain your information is correct?" asked the Captain.

"There can be no doubt about it. You've seen the letter, and our trace led direct to this ship, although we were just a little too late in getting word."

"I don't see what more we can do." said Captain Reed. "I've acted up to my instructions from the owners; and, of course, we can't keep the ship here indefinitely."

"No, Captain. You've done all you can. I must follow the scent elsewhere if it can be found in any other direction; but I'm so sure of my ground, that I almost feel inclined to make the trip with you. However, you know how to act should anything transpire during the voyage. Goodbye, and a safe voyage. I'll acquaint his lordship with the kindness of yourself and Mr. Purser."

The passengers, now released, and burning with curiosity, pressed around and plied the officers with questions as to the cause of the extraordinary proceedings, but their inquisitiveness was met with a firm silence.

The tender, for the second time, steamed away; the anchor was again weighed; the telegraph once more indicated "full speed," and the *Miranda* plunged forward to make up the delay. The temporary whirl was over, but food for endless speculation remained.

Why had the ship been stopped and everybody on board so closely examined? Somebody was wanted: who could it be? Was it a thief? Was it a murderer? Was it some heavy defaulter—an embezzler, a forger, a cashier, a company promoter? So the questioning ran in every community of this city of the sea.

"Mr. Purser, what is it?" "What's up?" "What does it all mean?" were the enquiries which assailed that official during the remainder of the day, but not a word of enlightenment was elicited. Even the most influential of the saloon passengers found their keen desire to be let into the secret met with a respectful and emphasised "No!" on the part of Mr. Anson.

"I'm sorry, Doc.," said the latter, that evening, when the surgeon and he were enjoying a cigar together, "but I can't explain this morning's proceedings even to you. The Captain and I are pledged to secrecy. It is the strangest and biggest thing of its kind I've ever come across, and there are big people and issues behind it. Nothing more regarding it may transpire so far as this ship is concerned, and that is why the Old Man and I have been requested not to reveal what we know. I can go so far as to say that a person of importance is missing, and it was thought that this person might be on board. But *I* don't see how such a thing can be possible, although the detective was dead certain of it, and his proofs seemed to be sound enough. If it should happen that the person is really with us, disguised or in hiding, which I deem very unlikely after our search of this morning, then, while the others must still be kept in the dark as much as possible, I'll let you know all about it, when you'll find the affair extraordinary and romantic enough, and will perceive the need of present secrecy."

A few days passed, but nothing occurred in connection with the mystery. Curiosity died down, and affairs flowed on in their wonted monotonous course. It seemed as though the incident had become forgotten.

There was one person, however, who had it ever in mind. Mr. Anson's preoccupied look indicated that his thoughts were busy.

"HE CONFESSED HE WAS A STOWAWAY."

He had much less to say than usual when he appeared amongst the passengers, and the manner in which he moved, restless and keen-eyed, over the ship, turning up in the various sections of the accommodation at all sorts of unexpected times beyond the official daily inspection, showed that he was on the look-out for somebody or other, as the members of the crew remarked amongst themselves.

On the morning of the fourth day out he sent for the Chief Steward.

"Mr. Bremner, Miss Hawkins, the senior second cabin stewardess, doesn't seem to be quite herself this trip. She appears to have something weighing on her mind. Has she met with any bereavement or other trouble, do you know?"

"Not that I am aware of, sir."

"Have you observed what I refer to?"

"I can't say I have; but, of course, I haven't been paying particular attention."

"Well, I wish you would keep an eye upon her, and let me know what you think. But, be politic, and *don't* let her see you are watching her. I've a good reason for wishing to know if anything is disturbing her. But meantime, not a word on the subject."

"All right, sir. I'll look round to-day, and have a talk with her about her passengers. If there is anything bothering her, I shall notice it, I think, for I understand her fairly well, and she's not very good at hiding her feelings."

That evening, he reported at the Purser's room.

"Yes, there is something troubling Miss Hawkins. I'm sure of it, although I can't think what it is; and, of course, it wouldn't have done to put it straight to her, after your warning. I asked her how all was at home, and she said her folks were well."

"Then it would appear that the trouble does not lie in that direction. How was she the day before we sailed? Was she bright and chatty as usual?"

"Yes, she was particularly cheerful, I thought."

"Ah! quite so. Her cause of disquietude, whatever it is, lies aboard, and has occurred since we left port. I thought so. Continue to keep your eyes open, but remember, '*mum's the word.*'" And Mr. Anson looked quite bright, as though he had found a clue.

It was a pale and tearful Miss Hawkins that left the Purser's office an hour later,

after a ten minutes' interview, but whatever the conversation, it had not greatly enlightened Mr. Anson.

The next day the Fourth Officer came and reported that a stowaway had been discovered.

The Purser sprang to his feet. "When and where?" he asked, eagerly.

"A few minutes ago. I was passing along the quarter-deck, and noticed what I was sure was a strange face. After that great inspection, I know them all pretty well. This was a mighty good-looking young fellow, fairly well-dressed, and I felt he didn't belong to the passengers. He confessed he was a stowaway. He seems to be of the better class, and, do you know, sir, I—I—have a notion that—that—it is—perhaps it is too absurd to mention, but——"

"Mr. Raymond," broke in the Purser, now considerably excited, "you're a sensible chap, and can keep your mouth shut. Was it your notion that the stowaway was a young woman?"

"It was. It was that that caught my eye."

"Then you're right, I do believe, and we have with us, after all, the very person we were looking for so anxiously. But we must act very discreetly, for she is a very important young lady indeed. Go at once, in a quiet manner, so as to attract as little attention as possible, and ask the stowaway to come here, that I may get his name, according to the usual regulations. Not a word to a soul, mind."

While the Fourth went off to find the stowaway, the Purser hurried to the chart-room.

That afternoon, a spare state-room in the saloon accommodation had an occupant, who never left it in the daytime during the remainder of the passage, but who, closely veiled, took a long promenade nightly, after most of the passengers had retired, on the arm of Mr. Anson.

"Here, Doctor, is the very singular story of our fair and romantically disposed stowaway, as far as I know it," said Mr. Anson on the evening of the day of the important discovery. "You'll keep it quiet, of course.

"Lady Evelyn Kennet is the daughter and only child of the Marquis of Trentwater. She is a young lady of great spirit, fond of outdoor sports, and given to adventure and wayward escapade. She lost her mother in infancy. Through the will of an uncle she is very wealthy in her own right, and will have uncontrolled use of her riches when she is of age. She is now about twenty. While she was still but a young girl, her father planned for her a marriage with a man of his own choosing, whom she describes as 'odious.' Engrossed in the pursuit of her pleasures, she gave the matter little thought. But as the event drew near, there came awakening and revulsion.

"Her entreaties were of no avail against the stern attitude of her father. The wedding was to have taken place this week, but Lady Evelyn determined to flee. Her maid is a sister of Miss Hawkins, whom she joined two days before we sailed. She hid in the stewardess' room during our search. She had provided herself, against contingencies, with male attire, and, fearing I might have Miss Hawkins' room searched, after my interview with the stewardess last night she donned the masculine garb, and came out on deck this morning. She says that she was dying for exercise and fresh air, and was willing to chance the consequences.

"Woman-like, she had written telling her maid of her intentions. The latter, conscience-stricken, revealed what she knew to the Marquis, and a detective was despatched to trace the fugitive, and conduct her home.

"That, very briefly, is the story of our fair stowaway, whose action has, happily, caused her father to cancel the engagement."

When the *Miranda* arrived at New York there was much despatching and receiving of cablegrams. And eventually, with Miss Hawkins for her companion and maid, Lady Evelyn returned home in another vessel.

THE SHIPS OF OUR NAVY.

By A NAVAL OFFICER.

H.M.S. "BENBOW," TWIN-SCREW BATTLESHIP.
Photo. by T. Thompson.

H.M.S. "RACEHORSE" TORPEDO BOAT DESTROYER.
Photo. by W. M. McWalters.

THESE form a subject about which so little is really known, at a time when people take such a keen interest in the Navy, that I may be excused in attempting to set to rights the would-be nautical man in the street.

I have so often been asked, "What boat are you on?" or have heard the remark, "What a magnificent boat!" (because the ship in question happened to have four

H.M.S. TRAINING-BRIG, "NORTHAMPTON."
Photo. by W. M. McWalters.

funnels); or "His ship (a third-class cruiser) must be a sister ship to yours (a battleship), because they both have two funnels." This latter, incredible though it may seem, is, nevertheless, a fact. Finally, I have been asked, "Have you ever been on a torpedo?"

In the first place, I would point out that the term *boat* is only correctly applied to torpedo craft, and small boats such as skiffs, dinghies, gigs, &c. All other vessels are ships. Never speak of a man being *on* a ship; he is *in* a ship. Never judge a vessel's fighting capacity by the number of her funnels; you will be very much out if you do. Yet this is often done. Be careful to find out beforehand what a man's ship is; because if you call his ship, which may be a battleship, a gunboat, you will hurt his feelings. My reply to the question, "Have you ever been on a torpedo?" is emphatically "No." Nor has any one of my acquaintance.

A torpedo is a fish-like missile, about twenty feet in length, which consists of a hollow steel body, with an explosive charge in the head. This body is propelled by an engine driven by compressed air. The torpedo, in various ways, is discharged or

H.M.S. "DRAKE," FIRST-CLASS CRUISER.
By Melville M. Piercy.

"fired" into the water, where, by means of an automatic apparatus, the engine in its interior is set working, and drives the propeller at the rear end of the torpedo.

H.M.S. "SCYLLA," SECOND-CLASS PROTECTED CRUISER.
Photo. by W. M. McWalters.

When a torpedo hits its mark the explosive charge in the head is exploded by means of a detonator. So we see that a torpedo's explosive power does not depend on the speed at which it is travelling through the water, for so long as its head strikes an obstruction, the force of explosion is the same.

The first consideration and the prevailing factor in naval warfare is the battleship, such as the *Dreadnought, King Edward VII., Queen*, &c. These are large vessels which have heavier guns and thicker armour than any other

H.M.S. "HANNIBAL," BATTLESHIP.
Photo. by Geo. Herbert.

type of craft. Their armour is from 6 in. to 12 in. in thickness on their sides, and they possess one or two steel decks of 1 in. to 4 in. in thickness. In time of war battleships would be used for pitched battles at sea, bombarding forts, or for blockading an enemy's fleet in a harbour. At the present time there is no such thing as a second-class battleship in the British Navy. They are all first class.

We will now pass on to cruisers. These are divided into two kinds—"armoured" and "protected," and each kind is subdivided into first and second classes. An armoured cruiser is one which has a thick belt of armour on its sides, and also a steel protective deck. A protected cruiser is one which has no side armour, but which relies for protection against gun-fire on a steel protective deck, varying from 4 in. to 5 in. in thickness, which is flat on the top, and slopes down to below the water-line at both ends and sides, and also on the arrangement of her coal bunkers, for it may be roughly estimated that 2 ft. of coal are equal to 1 in. of armour. This form of protection is only used to defend the ship's vitals from the fire of small guns. The first and second classes divide the larger and

H.M. TORPEDO-BOATS "SUNFISH" AND "RANGER" IN DOCK.
Photo. by W. F. Manse.

faster from the smaller and slower vessels of each kind of cruiser.

Our modern armoured cruisers are almost equivalent in fighting value to battleships. Protected cruisers would only be used in warfare as scouts to the battle squadron, against small craft, or for commerce destroying. Both battleships and cruisers carry means for discharging torpedoes.

Gunboats may be divided into two classes—those attached as tenders to gunnery schools, and torpedo gunboats. The former

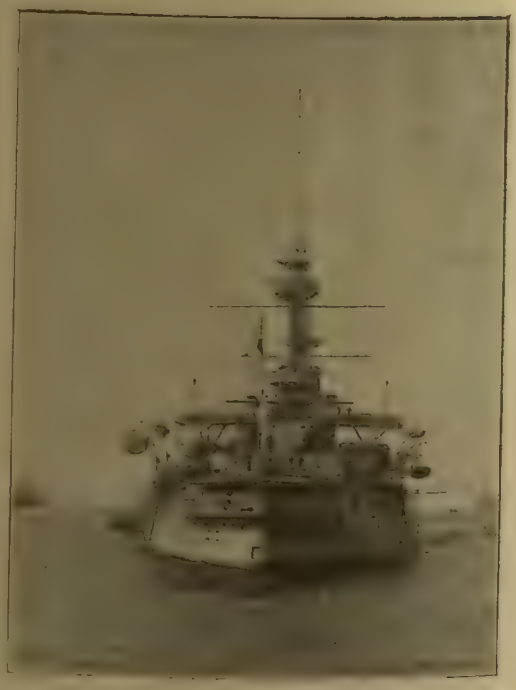
H.M.S. "COLLINGWOOD," BATTLESHIP,
Photo. by W. M. McWalters.

are fitted with any number and any class of guns, and are used for firing practice in the training of men and officers attached to gunnery schools. Torpedo gunboats are small, light vessels of moderate speed, fitted with torpedoes and guns of light calibre, which in the event of war would be used for commerce destroying, blockading small seaports, running despatches, and for river work. They would also be used, in conjunction with torpedo craft, for torpedo warfare.

We now come to torpedo-boat destroyers. It would, however, be better to begin with torpedo-boats in order to trace the origin of the destroyers. With the invention of the Whitehead torpedo it was found necessary to build small vessels to carry two or more of these weapons, which vessels could creep about at night, almost invisible to an opposing fleet, and discharge the torpedoes at the enemy's large vessels. These torpedo-boats were designed for a speed of about twenty knots per hour. It was then felt that a battle squadron required some type of vessel, small, but stronger and faster than a torpedo-boat, to protect the battleships from attack by torpedo-boats. Hence the torpedo-boat destroyer.

Scouts are small and very fast vessels whose duty in time of war would, as their name implies, be to act as scouts to the main squadrons.

From the foregoing it will be seen that though varied as are the construction and duties of the units, collectively they form the finest fighting force in the world—the British Navy.



H.M.S. "MAJESTIC," BATTLESHIP.

Photo. by C. L. Fisher.

"L'ENTENTE CORDIALE."

Admiral Caillard's flagship, *Massena*, leaving Portsmouth Harbour after the visit of the French Fleet, August 1905.

Photo. by Frank H. Pitts.

The Jamaica Earthquake.

[A "CAPTAIN" READER'S EXPERIENCE.]

IN a recent number we asked K. R. Brandon, of Kingston, Jamaica, to send us an explanation of a Jamaican stamp design. We little dreamed that his reply would take the shape of a description of one of the most appalling catastrophes of the past hundred years. Captainites who have written to Mr. Brandon must not expect answers from him, for all their letters have been lost. Mr. Brandon tells us that he is one of the few persons in Kingston who possess writing materials, and pathetically adds that he trusts we shall not form an estimate of his character by his present handwriting!

About 3.30 P.M. (he says) on Monday, January 14, I was at work in the Audit Office, when I felt the place shaking terribly, and at once realised that an earthquake was upon us. This being no new experience, I merely stood up and waited, never thinking that the earthquake would do any damage. But in this case, clouds of dust such as I had never seen before fell from the house-tops, and the place became as dark as night. I could not distinguish anything, but realising that all were leaving the building, I managed to find my way out, being the last to leave. I should state that the Audit Office is built of wood, and is one of the oldest erections in Kingston, a fact which had often been commented on in the papers in no complimentary terms, but as a more substantial building would have probably collapsed, those of us who were engaged therein have cause to be thankful. When I reached the street all was confusion. Trams, 'buses and other vehicles were lying underneath houses which had fallen on to them. Men were rushing about here, there, and everywhere, helping out others from beneath the *débris*. I saw men lying under stones and walls, and heard women shrieking, while even men were weeping. When the dust had subsided, I observed that huge buildings had fallen, and that in the business part of the city not a single place was left intact—and all this within a few minutes. Cries of "Fire!" arose, and conflagrations broke out in many places.

A few yards in front of me, among the ruins of a house, I saw a friend lying. He—a Captainite—had fallen from an upper floor along with the wall, and was partly buried. Another friend, also a CAPTAIN reader, helped me to extricate him. Fortunately, he was not hurt, although much bruised.

My next thought was home, and as I went along the streets I saw the same sights everywhere—ruin and death. Here were 'bus-drivers, horses, and vehicles, lying in a confused heap on the ground, and there men buried beneath bricks, and calling for help that never came—or came too late. As I went on I was frequently asked by anxious relatives if I had seen So-and-so, but I was never asked for any one I had seen. At last I reached what was once my home. Only a part of it was left standing, and that almost ready to fall at the slightest movement. I am glad to say that every one had escaped without serious injury.

People were hurrying to the race-course to escape the fire, or conveying loved ones to the hospital for attention. Many of the latter were apparently beyond human aid. All this time prayers were being shouted, if prayers they were, and still desolation and disaster were witnessed.

On my way home I saw people I had known lying lifeless. It was hard to believe that a man I had spoken to in the morning was no more; and that a friend with whom I had arranged to go boating that afternoon was dead.

Later, the question was, "Have you heard that So-and-so is dead?" But the former hopeful inquiry was still made.

Fires were now raging in several parts of the city, and the fire-engines could not get to them as, with but one exception, all the horses had been killed, and so the fires spread. Soldiers came down from their camp to render assistance, and in conjunction with the firemen eventually overcame the flames. Fortunately, there was no wind, or the whole of Kingston—or rather what was left of it—would have been burnt to the ground.

The following day I traversed the scenes of the fires, and saw corpses that had been roasted, while in some cases only skeletons remained. . . . It was awful, and I shall never forget the sight as long as I live.

Very few buildings have escaped destruction, and death and starvation stare survivors in the face. All have suffered, rich and poor alike. Help is expected from the other islands, from England, and from the U.S.A. But here I will stop, and hope that you will never experience an earthquake followed by fire. Either is terrible, but both. . . .

COMPETITIONS FOR MARCH.

Last day for sending in, March 18. (*Foreign and Colonial Readers, May 18.*)

NOTICE.—At the top of the first page the following particulars must be clearly written, thus:

Competition No. ——, Class ——, Name ——
Address ——, Age ——.

Letters to the Editor should not be sent with competitions.

We trust to your honour to send in unaided work.

Write only on one side of the paper.

COUPONS.—In order to ensure that those who compete for our prizes are actual purchasers of the magazine, we require all competitors to affix to their competitions the coupons which will be found on an advertisement page. A coupon is provided for each competition. Please use paste, gum, or paper-fasteners for attaching these coupons to the paper.

HONOURABLE MENTIONS.—Any competitor who has been honourably mentioned twelve times, may apply for a Certificate of Merit.

Address envelopes as follows: Competition No. ——, Class ——, THE CAPTAIN, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.

All competitions should reach us by March 18.

The Results will be published in May.

AGE RULE: A Competitor may enter for (say) an age limit 21 competition, so long as he has not actually turned 22. The same rule applies to the other age limits.

In every case the decision of the Editor is final, and he cannot enter into correspondence with unsuccessful competitors.

No. 1.—***"Rivers of the World."***—On one of our advertisement pages you will find twelve pictures. Each picture is intended to represent the name of a river in some part of the world. Write the name under each picture, fill in your name, age, class, and address, tear out the page, and post to us. Prizes: Three No. 2 "Scout" Cameras, manufactured by Messrs. Houghtons, Ltd. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.
Class III. . . Age limit: Twelve.

No. 2.—***"Criticism of 'The Informer.'"***—Send an essay, not exceeding 400 words, criticising "The Informer." For the best criticism submitted in each Class we will award a Cricket Bat made by Messrs. Benetfink and Co. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . No age limit.
Class II. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class III. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 3.—***"Drawing Competition."***—This month we are going to adopt the suggestion of several readers, and make competitors illustrate an actual passage in THE CAPTAIN. The passage to be illustrated will be found on page 543, in "The Second Panther:" "*As the animal rose towards him, all blazing eyes and gleaming fangs, the sinewy Highlander made the rifle-butt whistle circling round his head, and then brought it down on the rearing skull like a sledge-hammer.*" We have chosen this subject because in the full-page picture accompanying this tale you will see how the Highlander was dressed, what the rifle was like, and what a panther is like. All you have to do is to put each object in a different position. Pictures should be executed in Indian ink on cardboard. For the best drawing in each Class we shall award a prize of 10*s.*

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-five.
Class II. . . Age limit: Eighteen.

No. 4.—***"Photographic Competition."***—Send a print from your best negative. Photographs must be original, *i.e.*, not copied from the work of others. Neatness in mounting will be taken into consideration. Prizes: Photographic materials to the value of 7*s.* 6*d.*

Class I. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class II. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

No. 5.—***"Mis-spelt Words."***—A schoolmaster has been good enough to send us the following list of spelling mistakes which have occurred in the examination papers of his pupils. Make a list of these words, and write opposite to each the word which you imagine the pupil had in his mind.

armons	guimazeam
assiliam	hake
assmer	hoping caught
banert	istle
buiscet	kernacit
bazier	kouire
cerples	phifon
Chatichem	quieries
Chrismatch	ruebob
enichels	sizers.

They are all English words, we may add! The Prize will be a splendid Pocket-Knife. (See Prizes page.)

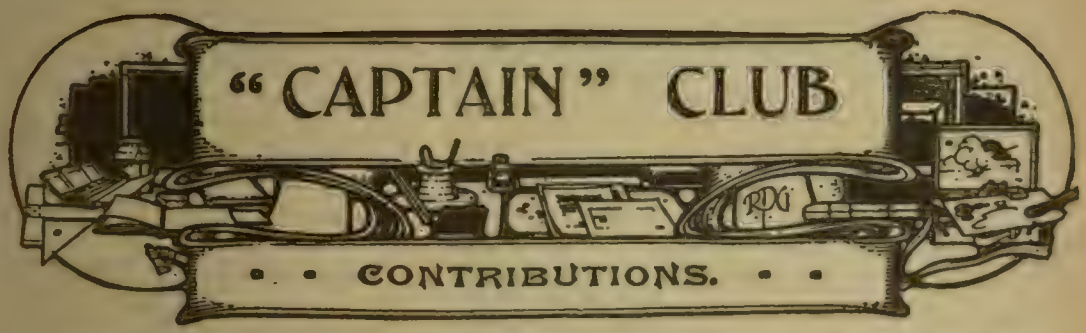
One age limit: Twenty-one.

No. 6.—***"Best Twelve Short Stories in Volume XVI."***—Send a list of what you consider to be the best twelve short stories in the volume which is concluded with this number. A short story is a story which is completed in one number. By way of showing our appreciation of his talents, we shall forward to the author of the story which tops the list, Volume XVI., suitably inscribed. Prizes: Three Boxes of Water Colours, manufactured by Messrs. George Rowney and Co. (See Prizes page.)

Class I. . . No age limit.
Class II. . . Age limit: Twenty-one.
Class III. . . Age limit: Sixteen.

FOREIGN and COLONIAL READERS are invited to compete. In their case the time limit is extended to ***May*** 18, Australian readers being allowed ten days longer. By "Foreign and Colonial" we refer to readers living ***outside*** Europe. There will be ***no age limit.*** One prize of 5*s.* will be awarded to the sender of the best entry in each Competition. Envelopes should be marked: "Foreign and Colonial March Competitions."

Coupons must not be sent loose.



THIS part of the Magazine is set aside for Members of the CAPTAIN Club, to which anybody who is a regular purchaser of THE CAPTAIN may belong. Contributions should be kept quite short. Drawings should be executed on stiff board in Indian ink. CAPTAIN Club contributions are occasionally used in other parts of the Magazine.

BOOKS by CAPTAIN authors are awarded to all the contributors to this month's "CAPTAIN Club" pages. Each prize-winner is requested to select a book.

Dr. Haig-Brown.

BY THE SISTER OF A PRESENT CARTHUSIAN.

IT was with the deepest regret that all Carthusians—present and old—heard on January 11 last, of the death of their beloved old Headmaster, the Reverend William Haig-Brown LL.D., at the age of eighty three. As this subject may be of interest to others besides those intimately connected with the school, I venture to write these lines.

William Haig-Brown was born in 1823. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, and Pembroke College, Cambridge, remaining at his college as Fellow, Tutor, and Dean until 1857. In this year he married Miss A. M. Rowsell, and became headmaster of Kensington School. In 1863 he was elected to the Headmastership of Charterhouse—a post he ably filled until 1897, when he retired, as Master of Charterhouse, to the London Charterhouse. In 1864 he received the degree of LL.D., in 1891 was made Honorary Canon of Winchester, and in 1899 was elected Honorary Fellow of Pembroke.

The greatest achievement of his headmastership was the transference—after much opposition—of the school from London to Godalming, and its increase from ninety to over five hundred boys. All that remains of Charterhouse in London now is the hospital for the pensioners, Old Hall, and Master's Lodge. Here, Dr. Haig-Brown spent the last nine years of his life, keeping in touch with Charterhouse in Surrey and taking also the greatest interest in his old school—Christ's Hospital. The headmaster exerted a strong influence over the whole school, his rigid discipline being tempered with a fatherly kindliness, and it was

THE ARMOUR WORN BY NED KELLY, THE NOTORIOUS AUSTRALIAN BUSHRANGER.

It will be remembered that the principal character in "The Track of Midnight," a serial in our last volume, wore armour underneath his clothing.

Photo. by L. Baggallay.

THE FIRST XV, EMANUEL SCHOOL, WANDSWORTH COMMON.
This school plays "rugger" during one winter term and "soccer" during the other.
Photo. by Mr. P. F. Davis.

no idle boast that of the five hundred and sixty fellows he knew every one by sight and something about each of them. He made a deep and lasting impression on all his pupils—for if a boy, while a junior, stood in awe of "the Doctor," when he rose in the school and came into closer contact with him, this awe changed to an affectionate regard.

Dr. Haig-Brown had a great fund of humour, and many are the anecdotes told about him. Soon after his appointment as headmaster, an enthusiastic Old Carthusian congratulated him and remarked that he was the first headmaster who was not an O.C. "How about the first headmaster?" was the ready retort. Once a parent wrote asking him to "inter" his son at Charterhouse. The Doctor wrote back that he would be most happy "to undertake the boy."

Dr. Haig-Brown was one of the few men to whom memorials have been raised during their lifetime. Saunderites was presented by old Saunderites with a stained glass window to commemorate his long rule of thirty-four years in the house, and outside Chapel, overlooking Green, is his statue in bronze.

The Doctor was a brilliant scholar in ancient and modern languages—many of his poems he translated into Latin, Greek, French and German. He also wrote "Charterhouse Past and Present," and "Sertum Carthusianum." The remainder of his poetical works were, in 1905, collected by one of his daughters into a volume entitled, "Carthusian Memories." Last March, at the request of a present Carthusian, Dr. Haig-Brown very kindly autographed a copy of this book. When the Doctor returned the book, he wrote saying he had put in "an inscription which is very dear to me." On the fly-leaf, in the old headmaster's neat and scholarly hand, were the words:

Floreat æternum Carthusiana domus.
WM. HAIG-BROWN.

"Meteors" of the Football World.

ONE of the chief characteristics of the Association code of football is the meteoric manner in which many of its exponents achieve fame. Almost weekly we hear of some player exhibiting exceptional form, but it often happens that whilst we are watching the development of this or that performer of promise, we are suddenly surprised to find another player, whom we had not thought worthy of notice, springing into prominence and becoming at once a shining star in the football world.

During the season 1904-5 many young players achieved fame in true meteoric style. First and foremost came Charlie Roberts, now captain and centre-half of Manchester United, who, after receiving the usual "polishing" of a raw recruit at Grimsby, was transferred by them to Manchester for the then record fee of £750. His *début* with the "United" was noticeable for some really clever exhibitions, and ere the season had advanced very far he was mentioned on every side as England's coming centre-half. And so it proved to be. The same season he attained the honour of figuring in all England's international contests,

SOME FOOTBALL POSES.
Drawn by F. R. C. Newnham.

and also played with great distinction in the Inter-League match at Glasgow.

The same season also gave rapid fame to young Hampton, of Aston Villa, whose rise was even quicker than that of the Mancunian "skipper." Up to the time of the *now* historical cup-tie between the Villa and Newcastle United, Hampton had only been known as the centre-forward of the "Villa" team and nothing more. But on the day when his side conquered the Tynesiders at the Crystal Palace, Hampton shone refulgently above his *confrères*, not only playing *the* game of his football career, but scoring two really magnificent goals, which gave his side victory and made for himself a name which will ever be remembered in the history of "soccer."

The 1904-5 season also brought into great prominence and favour Conlin, of Manchester City, and Shepherd, of Bolton Wanderers, each being chosen, to represent England. Conlin, although of diminutive stature, is still one of the finest outside-left forwards in the kingdom, whilst Shepherd yet retains the name of being one of the best goal-getters known to the game.

During the first four months that have elapsed at the time of writing, the goddess of fame has shed her smiles principally upon Hilsdon, the Chelsea centre-forward, who before these lines reach the public eye, will have appeared in his first International, *i.e.*, England *v.* Ireland, at Liverpool. For a youngster of twenty, this is assuredly an honour of the highest degree!

ENOS E. HARWOOD.

OLD BILLY (*the short-sighted villager, watching the local lacrosse team*): "'Ang me, if them young fewls h'aint a'bin chasing that there butterfly this last half-hour, but they ain't caught 'im yet."

Drawn by R. M. Robertson.

PUNJABI BEGGARS.
One of the many types of Indian religious devotees.
Photo. by G. J. Sparkes-Madge.

The Kafirs.

I AM writing to point out several inaccuracies which occur in the article entitled "The Kafirs," which appeared in your December number. The author calls the young women *umfazis*, and the married women *intombis*. This is wrong, for the order should be reversed, *intombi* meaning a girl, and *umfazi* a wife. These words belong to the Zulu language, but I think all the races of Kafirs use the same or similar terms.

The writer, perhaps, refers to the natives in Durban or some other town, when he mentions the fact of ricksha boys being out till midnight. In Johannesburg, all natives are required to be indoors by 9 P.M. unless they are native police, or are in possession of "Special Passes," given to them by their employers.

I can second everything the writer says about these "boys" being lazy, but, as he remarks, there *are* odd ones who can be trusted to work well, though they are few and far between.

H. V. GILBERT
(Johannesburg).

Euclid At Home.

OF Euclid's private life, a line
May not be out of place.
So from his works a "point" or two
About the man we'll "trace."

We may be sure that Euclid's life
Was "plane" and most particular;
He never drank to great excess
But kept his "perpendicular."

He lived by rules and axioms,
His speech was never random,
But based on strict hypothesis—
"Quod erat demonstrandum."

One knows a fellow by his friends,
So doubtless you're aware
His "circle" of acquaintances
Inhabited a "square."

On sport our friend was most "acute,"
A line he'd oft be dangling,
And with his chum Isosceles
He'd constantly "try—angling."

That Noah was his ancestor,
We might, with truth, remark;
For Euclid surely understood
The structure of an "arc."

If many schoolboys had their way,
We may be well assured
His life would then have been cut off
Much shorter than a "chord."

J. V. G.

The Black Watch.

PERHAPS of all the famous regiments in our army the Black Watch is most conspicuous for its bravery. It was made a regular regiment in 1739, and first saw active service in Flanders, chiefly at Dettingen, where it formed the rearguard. It afterwards saw active service in Canada, and in the attack on Ticonderoga was almost annihilated. Then in 1776 the regiment sailed to America, but was taken captive at Jamestown, and held there for two years. We next hear of it at Guildermalsen, where it recaptured two guns. The Black Watch fought against Napoleon at Alexandria in Egypt, and in the Peninsular War at Corunna, Fuentes d'Onoro, Nivelle and other places. In 1815, at Quatre Bras, the regiment lost 298 killed and wounded. At Alma Sir Colin Campbell gave it the place of honour, and addressed its members as follows: "Now, men, the army will watch us. Make me proud of the Highland Brigade." The Black Watch was in India at the time of the Mutiny, and shared in the Relief of Lucknow, while in Egypt it figured in the battles of Tel-el-Kebir, El-Teb, and Tamai. In South Africa this famous regiment formed part of Lord Methuen's force, and was at Magersfontein, where it suffered great losses, and at Paardeberg, where it added fresh laurels to its record. The Black Watch is the oldest of the six Highland regiments in our army, and in addition to its courage is particularly distinguished for its excellent discipline. Surely Scotchmen have something to be proud of when they read of the doings of this celebrated regiment!

F. C. L.

THE DEATH OF SIR RALPH ABERCROMBIE AT THE BATTLE OF ALEXANDRIA, MARCH 21, 1801.
From the Painting by De Loutherbourg. Photo. Rischgitz Collection.

"PICTURE GALLERY COMPETITION."
A Book Title: "Hard Times." (Dickens).
Drawn by H. G. Evans.

represent Scotland in the seventies, eighties and nineties. In all he figured in twenty-five Internationals, this being the Scottish record. Although the Scottish Union have not seen their way this season to bestow one of the coveted "caps" on any member of the team, that the present Scottish champions are still a power to be reckoned with is seen by a glance at the league table. There, in conjunction with the Glasgow Academicals, the Edinburgh Academicals occupy the leading position, having only sustained one defeat throughout the season 1906-7.

R. B. FORGAN.

The Pioneers of Rugby in Scotland.

SCOTLAND undoubtedly owes much of her pre-eminence in Rugby football to the Edinburgh Academicals. This club can boast of being the pioneers of the game in Scotland, having been instituted in 1858. That it has good reason to be called "Scotland's Premier Club" is evident, when we remember that at one time and another it has had forty-seven Internationals playing in the team, whose collective appearances in these trials reach the huge total of 237. Of the club's famous members, first and foremost comes the late Dr. R. W. Irvine. Picked for the first International match in 1871, before giving up the game he created the great record of having played against England ten times, and captained the Scottish side for six years. No other player has touched Irvine's ten "caps" against England, but Maclagan comes next with nine, while McMillan and Mark Morrison tie with eight. Irvine's clubmate, Maclagan, could boast that he had been thought fit to

"PICTURE GALLERY COMPETITION."
"The Passing of Arthur" (Tennyson).
Drawn by J. H. Martin.

"PICTURE GALLERY COMPETITION."
"Robbery under Arms" (Boldrewood).
Photo by M. E. Nolan.

The Chequers as an Inn Sign.

ANYTHING not generally known is the origin of the name Chequers given to an inn. It originated as far back as the reign of William I., when the Earl of Warren, who accompanied the Conqueror to England, had exclusive power to grant licences to sell malt liquors; and in order that his agents might more easily collect the money paid for licences, the door-posts of the inns were painted in chequers, viz., checky, or, and azure, which were the arms of the Earl of Warren.

G. P. JEWITT.

SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, LONDON.

Tales of Mean People.—This was a very amusing, but at the same time a very difficult, competition to adjudicate. Some extraordinary samples of meanness reached us, and the opinions of the Staff differed as to which was the meanest person of the lot. It was a competition in which the Editor had to be called upon to give the casting vote. I, therefore, am awarding the Louis Wain picture to E. Gawan Taylor (aged 17), 4 Harewood Hill, Darlington, because of all the anecdotes submitted, his has the most genuine ring about it. One can imagine the thing actually happening. Here is the story:

The meanest person of whom I have ever heard was the owner of a certain sweet shop in a Yorkshire village. One of my aunts, when she was a girl, went in to buy a pennyworth of sweets. After carefully placing a number of the required sweets in the scale pan, the shopkeeper, finding that they did not quite make the necessary weight, carefully chose another sweet and added it to the pile. But, unfortunately, the sweet proving heavier than he had expected, the arm of the balance containing the sweets slowly descended. So he took the offending sweet off the pile and actually *bit it in two*, placing one half back in the bottle and the other in the paper bag into which he emptied the pennyworth. Then, without a word of comment on this extraordinary performance, he handed the bag to my aunt.

This story was run close by one sent by James Bland, 6 Windsor Street, Glasgow, who tells us that it is copied word for word from "A Course of French Composition," by L. Janton, B.A.

An old man, well known for his avarice, wrote once a letter to a friend, and wishing to save the stamp, he ordered his servant to take it to its address. Now, the day was bad, it was raining, and the girl wore a new dress that she was afraid of spoiling. She looked into the street, saw a boy she knew, and calling out to him, she said: "Carry this letter for me, and I shall give you a penny." The miser heard the offer, and quickly said: "Give me the penny, and I shall carry the letter myself." And he did so.

This amusing tale takes a Consolation Prize, and another Consolation Prize goes to Mary Ball, 23 Grange Avenue, Chapeltown Road, Leeds, whose anecdote, like that of the prizewinner's, has a flavour of reality about it—in fact, Miss Ball says that she can furnish the name and address of the butcher concerned. This is her tale:

A lady of fairly good position, living in one of the suburbs of a large town, went to her butcher with a basket filled with wooden skewers. She told him she had saved them—that they had been weighed to her as meat, and that she had brought them to receive their weight back again in meat!

A third Consolation Prize is awarded to Florence Hoare, 10 Hillmarton Road, N., who says that she was once walking through a churchyard in Scotland when she noticed a grave which was destitute of headstone or memorial of any kind. Passing on to the next mound, which was distinguished by an ancient monument boasting many inscriptions, she read among the latter the following:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
JANE,
WIFE OF JOHN CLANCARTY,
AGED 38.
BURIED IN NEXT GRAVE.

Much astonished, Miss Hoare made inquiries of a countryman. "Weel," says he, "ye see, grave stones tak' a bit o' siller, so he got permission for a trifle to put that on, and *saved the expense.*"

Now we come to the Honourable Mentions, which anecdotes hardly possess the ring of the genuine metal. For instance, Harold Wontner says that early one morning a bricklayer was going up a scaffolding with a hod of bricks when he fell to the ground, sustaining a broken leg and other injuries. The master-builder, who was notorious for his close-fistedness, visited the hospital to

which the poor fellow had been taken, and approaching the latter's bedside, observed, "How on earth did you manage it, Jim?" "Sheer accident, sir—I slipped," replied the sufferer faintly. "Oh, well, you know, you should have been more careful," said the master-builder. "Every brick in the hod was broken, and I find by the time-sheet that you had not earned enough to pay for them, but as you are injured I won't press the matter further—you may pay for them gradually when you recover."

It is possible, of course, that this story is true, but the next is, I am sure, pure invention. It is from Raymond Ashmore:

I know of no meaner person than the man who stole the sugar out of the blind canary's cage.

That faithful Captainite, Mr. Albert A. Kerridge, one of our "old boy" readers, tells a true story about rabbit skins. Some may say that his anecdote deserves a prize, but it will be observed that the tales I have given prizes to relate to persons whose meanness was of an extraordinarily petty description. Mr. Kerridge's hero was mean, but mean on a larger scale than the heroes of the anecdotes quoted above. As is well known, at Christmastime, in the remote parts of the country, the big landowners often distribute large quantities of game amongst their tenants, and so it fell out that to a resident of a certain village were despatched one hundred and fifty rabbits to be divided among his fellow villagers. The tale goes on:

The person receiving them had a reputation for parsimony, but few were prepared for what actually followed. Before delivering the rabbits to the cottagers he had each one skinned, in order, as he said, that the parishioners might be saved the trouble of skinning them!

Well, well—perhaps he was in league with a manufacturer of imitation fur coats!

This Competition provided a plentiful crop of chestnuts. Frank H. Halliday, for instance, treats us to that white-bearded yarn about the rich man who left his money equally to an Englishman, an Irishman, and a Scotchman, on condition that each deposited £5 in his grave. Many of you, of course, will know how the story goes on. The Englishman put a five-pound note in the grave, the Irishman five sovereigns, and the Scotchman wrote out a cheque for £15 and, placing this in the grave, took out the five-pound note and the sovereigns as "change," remarking with a wag of his head, "Ah, weel, I've done ma duty."

Another effort which is not, I fancy, as fresh as it might be tells of how Harry Williams was a boy who wanted to get above Thomas Jackson in class. When Jackson was asked a question, he had a trick of fumbling with the bottom button of his waistcoat. Before school one day Harry Williams, without being noticed by Jackson, cut off this button, and when poor Jackson was asked a question and found no button to twist, he grew embarrassed and was unable to reply, whereupon Williams went up above him. Very, very mean of Williams, wasn't it!

Who knows some more?—Well, this is not what I should call an unsuccessful competition, but at the same time I am rather surprised that more genuine cases of meanness have not come to hand. Perhaps readers will send some further mean tales to THE CAPTAIN Club Corner. A nice book for each accepted anecdote—see "The Latest" for full list to choose from.

The late Dr. Haig-Brown.—From all parts of the English-speaking world, wherever his "old boys" have penetrated (writes "Martia"), words of regret and sorrow are reaching us at the loss of the old "Chief," Dr. Haig-Brown, for thirty-three years Head Master of Charterhouse School. A loss of a friend, indeed, leaving in many hearts a gap impossible to fill. His interest in the school, beginning in the year 1863, ended only with his death, though he resigned the Headmastership in 1897 when he was appointed Master of the London Charterhouse and Hospital. Of the thousands of boys who passed through his hands, he cared for and took a personal interest in all, from the school monitors to the most insignificant "new bug." All felt instinctively that there was a strength, sympathy, and judgment in their Head to which all had equal right, and could appeal in time of need. The bond of union between him and his masters was equally strong, and his genial manner and dignified presence peculiarly fitted him for his work. The obedience, self-control, and truth he urged meant strength to the community. Whether it was class-room, workshop, or playing-field, the Doctor's keen interest in each was an incentive to excel. His remembrance of his old boys was phenomenal. A young officer accosted him one day: "I am afraid, sir,

THE LATE DR. HAIG-BROWN, HEADMASTER OF CHARTERHOUSE SCHOOL FOR THIRTY-THREE YEARS.

Photo. Dickinsons.

you won't remember me." "Let me see," said the Doctor, looking at him closely. "Yes, I know you. You were in Hodgsonites, and, yes! your father was a surgeon in—" and heartiest greetings followed. Yet this O. C. had left the school years before, and had never been in the Doctor's form, or a boy of his house. Another instance: An O. C. requiring a reference for a mastership, wrote for it to Dr. Haig-Brown, and received a letter enumerating not only his successes when at the school, but what he had done at Oxford, &c., both in exams. and athletics. He followed the careers of his old pupils with an interest extraordinary in a man of eighty.

As testifying to his wonderful powers of discipline, one well-remembered incident may be related. On March 14, 1894, it was arranged that the whole school, some 350 boys and thirty-five masters, should be photographed in a big group. A gigantic stand was erected—some thirty feet high, and built of massive beams, firmly nailed. When all were in their places, and the photo. on the point of being taken, without warning, the whole stand collapsed, and structure and boys were a confused heap, suggestive of a mass of dead or maimed young bodies. An eye-witness says it was too terrible for words, but the Doctor on the instant shouted out that no one was to move. Then, in

regular method, beams were lifted, and layer by layer the boys were extricated, for the order to lie still had been implicitly obeyed, and there was no panic. Movement would have shifted timbers, and terrible nails would have worked further havoc, but under Providence, and thanks to the quiet endurance of the boys and their strict obedience of "the Master's" order, the accident resulted in not a single death, or, indeed, serious injury.

In conclusion, it may be noticed how powerful for good the Doctor's influence has been on many lives. His words of commendation or encouragement are a treasured memory. "He was a man; take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again."

"The Second Panther."—As I forge my way through masses of MSS., the thought often occurs to me that quite promising ideas are spoilt by writers not taking the trouble to study the "art" of short story writing. The best artist is the man who enchains the interest of the reader—who holds the reader in a spell. A very good specimen of the story which fulfils this qualification is Mr. J. Dougall Reid's "Second Panther," which appears in this number. From first to last the reader's interest is held tight. And there is something more than mere excitement in this tale. There is thought. Take that little paragraph at the end:

> It lay with its head on its fore-paws, watching him, and the moonlight revealed to the startled soldier a thing that haunted him for many a day—the look of solemn wonder, of patient questioning, in its eyes.

You may read a hundred adventure stories, a hundred stories about men shooting wild animals, without coming across a touch of this sort. This writer has a heart. Although his hero was bound to kill the panther, yet the narrator can find sympathy, great sympathy, for the poor beast that so gallantly endeavoured to avenge the death of its mate. "Patient questioning." Yes, the panther could not understand why all this had come about. At one fell blow it had been robbed of its mate and of its own life, and its cubs were left without father or mother. It is a real tragedy of the jungle.

Ice-Hockey in Canada.—They seem to play hockey in a lively way in Canada. A Canadian Captainite sends me a cutting from a newspaper, describing how Ottawa played Montreal at ice-hockey, from which I extract the following:

> There have been many rough hockey matches in the past, but at them both sides mixed it up in the heat of battle, and the fouls that were committed were committed because the men lost their temper under the strain of a hard-fought match, but on Saturday the brutality was all one-sided, and men deliberately skated the width of the rink to knock out another man. . . . Spittal, the point, lifted his stick like an abattoir butcher would lift his axe to deal a poor unfortunate ox the death blow, and let Blachford have it right on the top of the head.
>
> Blachford dropped as if he had been pole-axed, and when he was carried off, a trail of blood showed the direction the procession took to the side.

Our Rugby football, it would appear, is a girl's parlour game compared with Canadian ice-hockey.

School Debating Societies.—It will be remembered that I suggested in a footnote to this article, which appeared last month, that all the members of a house should be admitted to its debating society. Mr. O. C. Williams, the author of the paper, disagrees with me. "I think a debating society should be small to be effective," he writes, "and that seventy members is too big a numbers for that atmosphere of confidence to prevail which is absolutely necessary for the school-boy. Moreover, I cannot see how little boys of twelve or thirteen can possibly join in a debate on equal terms with those of eighteen or nineteen years. It is cruelty to force them to speak, and perpetually silent members are not wanted." In reply to this, I may point out that throwing open a debating society to every member of a house does not necessarily mean that every member will attend. It is unlikely that boys of twelve or thirteen would wish to join, but even if they did there is no reason why they should be forced to speak. Again, if juniors joined, they would not do so with the idea of being perpetually silent. I must repeat that I think a debating society should not be confined to a small, select body; indeed, invitations to be present should be freely extended to members of other houses.

The end of Tantia Bheel.—In this number "The Exploits of Tantia Bheel" come to an end with the capture of the outlaw by Ashcroft, the gigantic police officer. It is very probable that Tantia escaped again, and continued to harass Messrs. Fielding, Cummings, Bell,

and Ashcroft. But that, eventually, he was caught and executed is, however, very certain, for a correspondent bearing the thoroughly British name of John Bull encloses an old photograph which his father brought home from India many years ago, on the back of which, in the handwriting of Mr. Bull's father, appear the words: "*Tantia Bhil. A noted Dacoit. Hung at Jubbulpore.*"

TANTIA BHEEL.

So died Tantia Bheel, meeting the violent end which must come sooner or later to most men who live by violence.

"Critic's Handwriting."—In the November number we reproduced the handwriting of a critical correspondent, and invited Captainites to read his character, as indicated thereby. Many excellent attempts at a genuine delineation were received, and of these that sent by J. W. Mandefield was awarded the prize, as agreeing most nearly with our graphological expert's opinion. According to Mr. Mandefield, "'Critic'" is "observant, truthful, proud, sarcastic, not very musical, and would make a good lawyer"; with all of which particulars our expert agrees, adding that "Critic," although undemonstrative, is affectionate, kind-hearted, and possessed of literary and artistic ability. The deductions of D. J. Jones, to whom a consolation prize was awarded, coincide in the main with Mr. Mandefield's, though, in addition, this competitor informs us that "Critic" is "not very religious," and "would make an ideal editor"! L. J. Hodgson, another consolation prize-winner hazards a guess that "Critic" is a Scotchman. Many and diverse are the qualities accorded to "Critic" by those competitors who received honourable mention, all of whose attempts evinced an expenditure of much careful thought on the subject. One, for instance, declares that "Critic" is "not very fond of females, but likes dogs;" another tersely declares that he is inclined to be "ratty"; a third avers that he "makes himself most agreeable to the fair sex, and is very fond of our English lakes;" while in the opinion of a fifth he "can make himself charming—on occasions, and *vice versâ*."

Volume XVII.—For our next volume I have secured two very fine serials. One is by Mr. P. G. Wodehouse, already highly popular with our readers. Its title is "Jackson Junior," and its main theme is cricket. That is all I mean to tell you about it, though I may add that the story is full to the brim of that easy, jolly humour which makes all Mr. Wodehouse's work so readable. The other serial—"The Fatal List"—is from the pen of Mr. Herbert Hayens, who as a writer of boy's romances has no superior. In this tale Mr. Hayens tells of the grim horrors of the French Revolution, as witnessed by a boy living at Lyons, where the scene of the story is laid. This thrilling narrative will make Mr. Hayens a firm favourite with Captainites—if, indeed, his widely read books have not already accomplished that desirable end.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

[*As we receive a great number of letters, our correspondents are requested to bear in mind that we can only comment on communications that we consider to be of general interest. Readers requiring information quickly should enclose stamped envelopes or postcards, according to the length of the answer desired.*]

"How Risden Played for Abbeyside." Dr. A. N. Malan writes: "With reference to a correspondent's charge of anachronisms in this

tale, I plead guilty to have taken some liberties which I hoped might be condoned as an author's privilege. The game we played at Abbeyside in the old days contained the rudiments from which Rugby was evolved. Memory is somewhat dim, but I seem distinctly to recollect 'passing,' and the 'maul' was drawn from life, as it struck an insignificant onlooker who had but a meagre knowledge of the Rules. As regards the corvine vaticinations, it may interest your readers to hear a remarkable coincidence. I had just finished writing the yarn, and one early morning, before the school-bell sounded, I heard a rook give *three* caws, followed by a pause, and then *two* caws. It happened that my boys were going to play a football match in the afternoon. I jotted in my note-book, as I went to breakfast, *Three goals: two goals*. And, sure enough, that was the actual result of the match in the afternoon."

The Old Fag's Money-box.—In addition to those acknowledged last month the following amounts have been received: "Brown," 3*s.*; J. D. Moore, 2*s.* 6*d.*; Nelly Lupton, 1*s.* 9*d.*; W. R. C., 1*s.* 6*d.*; "Gundulf," 1*s.* 3*d.*; Albert Albrow, "A Curious Blakey," M. H. S. G., 1*s.* each; "Nevin," "Mousie," Amy A. Taylor, "Foll," F. L. S., "Walkley," "Exonia," A. J. Kershaw, J. D. Shepherd, C. W. C., T. Barclay, "Pack," "A. Scotch Lassie," "Geoff," Dorothy Cooper, "Hopeful," "Leo," "Eagle," "Pompey," "Dummy," "Twig," "The Bee," "Bob," "Old Dunstonian," Evelyn Palethorp, "Pansie," "Evelina," "Lectrice," Anna Friedrichs, Basil P. Bothamley, "Sceptic," L. H. A., N. C. Thorpe, "Annie," "Heligoland," F. C. Berry, R. C. Morris, "Erica," Cecil Mathew, "Seumas," "Gallicus," W. P. H., L. A. Moubray, 6*d.* each. Total: £1 14*s.* 6*d.*

"Nevin."—I don't believe in a fellow going to a colony if he can possibly get anything to do at home. There is always room in this country for a good man. Certainly there are many scholastic openings for University graduates in the Colonies, but you are taking a doleful view of the future if you are already beginning to think that you must rely on the Colonies for a decent billet. Your handwriting is not particularly good, but it is far better than many specimens I have seen. You should always endeavour to write your signature as plainly as possible. I am often troubled with illegible signatures at the end of quite legible letters.

"Sandy" (Novia Scotia).—Before you can expect anything like a criticism from me, you must submit a really carefully executed drawing. You can learn drawing in a fashion by post, but personal instruction is what a student should try to get. Pencil sketches can be reproduced, but they make such unsatisfactory pictures that no editor dreams of publishing them unless they happen to come out of the note-books of Whistler or Phil May, or some one of that order.

C. L. Bradbury.—See answer to "Sandy." If you want to have a drawing reproduced in THE CAPTAIN, you must send one of a specially interesting nature. A horse's head, however well drawn, would not particularly interest our readers.

"Geraint."—What you must understand is that our competitions must appeal to the great majority of our readers. Now, the great majority of our readers are not literary, nor have they got complete sets of THE CAPTAIN from the first volume, and, moreover, cannot obtain them, as the first eleven volumes are out of print. An examination

THE SHRINE OF OSIRIS.
A Weird Sketch by T. Renton.

paper on the contents of THE CAPTAIN from No. 1 sounds all right, but as only a limited number of readers could enter for it, the great majority would have cause to growl. Still, I will keep your suggestion by me, as it may lead to my setting a competition of a kindred but more practicable nature. You were clubbed all right.

L. G.—You will see that I have adopted your proposal, viz.. that the drawing competition should take the form of illustrating a passage in THE CAPTAIN. The idea had already been suggested to me. Your drawing is as yet very crude. Go in for our competitions, and if you gain a prize or an honourable mention you may take it that you are getting on, for we don't give honourable mentions to anything that does not show promise. You must do your work on cardboard in Indian ink. It will be quite fair on your part to recommend THE CAPTAIN to your friend in Trinidad, which already possesses a nice little coterie of Captainites.

"Rather Thin."—I cannot be always repeating myself. I have told correspondents over and over again how to get strong, so please look through your back numbers. Of course you won't get much stouter while your are growing. When you stop growing you will fill out. Take care that while you are growing you don't over-exert yourself. If you are not particularly strong, don't go in for exercises that mean great exertion, such as cycle-racing, weight-lifting, &c. Send a stamped, addressed envelope if you want more information.

H. R. Simpson says that there is no doubt that CAPTAIN readers like school stories better than anything else, and wants to know why I don't print more of them. I am quite aware that what

GENTLEMAN (*inquiring price of coal*): "And how's the coal to-day, Pat?"

PAT: "Same as it was yesterday—black as ever."

Drawn by Sidney W. Freeman.

Simpson says is true, but my difficulty is that I can't get hold of all the good school stories I should like to. Contributors had better make a note of Simpson's hint. Mr. Wodehouse contributes one of his rattling school yarns to our new volume, and alongside of it will run a story by Mr. Herbert Hayens of the very first degree of merit.

G. L. tells me that Dagmar House School, Hatfield, an account of whose football doings we recently published, has an equally good cricket record. During the last two seasons it played twenty-two matches, winning twenty, drawing one, and losing one by the narrow margin of three runs. All I can say is that Dagmar House must have an exceptionally fine lot of athletes under its roof, as I understand that the schools it plays are not weaklings, because, though only a preparatory school, it takes on grammar schools and teams of that ilk.

C. F. W. Lodge.—Your complaint is very reasonable, but of course I cannot enter into explanations with a reader as to why particularly I put in certain articles or don't put in certain articles. Running a magazine is a business concern. There are reasons why some things must appear, and others need not. There will be cricket articles all the summer, and football articles next winter. You must remember, however, that "rugger" players are just as keen on "rugger" articles as you are on "soccer" [illegible]

"Goggles."—Your "Springbok" ode is too long, and is not exactly topical. Don't write parodies; they lead too much to imitation. Don't copy Gibson heads and Gibson girls; do something out of your *own* head. As regards your football difficulty, if I were you I should consult the captain of the First XV. It is certainly hard luck that although you have plenty of pace you cannot see your passes owing to your short sight. This being so, I fear there is hardly anything for it but to go into the scrum or take to "soccer."

F. C. White sends a photo. of Mr. Thomas Enstone, who is 104 years of age, on a tricycle. Unfortunately, Mr. Enstone, who wears a dark coat, has been photographed against a dark background, with the result that his figure is barely distinguishable, and in a reproduction would be less so. Mr. Enstone must be a wonderful old man. I hope F. C. White will recommend THE CAPTAIN to him. He would indeed be an "old boy" reader!

S. J.—I wish you well, and, judging by your letter, I should say you would do well. Personally, I consider that the course of training for the priesthood (of any creed) should include a wide study of human nature as well as theology. Practical advice with regard to their mundane difficulties is what every priest should be qualified to give to members of his congregation, in addition to spiritual instruction.

"Gwendolen," the first reader to ask me to tell her character from her handwriting, suggests that I should get my graphological expert to read her hand, and then compare the latter's opinion with the guessing one which I gave. I am quite willing to do this, and "Gwendolen" may look out for our expert's reading in our next number. I will print it alongside my little effort. The result should be amusing.

Certificates of Merit.—A. Scott, Jnr., suggests that we should make our rule about certificates retrospective. This I am quite willing to do, and so our competitors will kindly take notice that anybody who has been honourably mentioned twelve times may apply for a certificate, giving, at the same time, for our guidance particulars of his mentions.

M. Banks.—The tricks described by Mr. Devant were of the most simple description, and you ought to find plenty more in any shilling book on conjuring. Thanks for your kindly assistance. I wish every present subscriber to THE CAPTAIN would make a point of getting us at least one new reader. April will be a splendid number to start with, as it will be full of good things.

THREE MEMBERS OF THE FORCE.

An Impressionist Sketch by Dyke White

"Setsero."—Sequels are generally failures, and so I do not think it would be wise of Mr. Swainson to try to write a sequel to the "The Informer," relating the doings of his principal characters at the University. In "The Informer," the chief interest is the mystery about Erpingham; in a sequel that mystery would no longer exist.

Bound Volumes for Village Library.—Any CAPTAIN readers who have bound volumes of magazines for which they have no further use are invited to forward the same to Miss Helen C. Tancock, the Rectory, Little Waltham, Essex. They should be sent, carriage paid, to Chelmsford Station, G. E. R.

O. K. Holmes.—Our correspondent, "Common sense," doesn't object to boys and girls being friends, but he considers, and rightly, that they ought not to meet each other without their parents' knowledge. More of this sort of thing goes on than parents imagine, and the result is detrimental to the character of both boy and girl.

"Ambitious."—Sketches show promise, but there are many thousands of young people who can do work just as good as yours. To succeed nowadays, one's work must possess distinction of an outstanding kind. There is no reason, of course, why yours should not possess that distinction some day.

H. M. A.—Your poem is not distinguished, but it has merit. It seems incomplete. You ought to end it up by showing how the martyrdom of those Christians set their faith on a firm foundation. You should avoid such awkward sentences as "A storm of cheers breaks forth," and "The multitude that throngs the tiers."

January "Editorial."—I have to acknowledge a number of appreciative letters from schoolmasters and others referring to observations I made in the January number. These letters, I can assure my correspondents, have given me great pleasure.

Character from Handwriting.—Where possible, delineations have been sent by post. Replies to those applicants who only gave a *nom-de-plume* will be inserted as space permits, or sent direct on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

"Brown."—A very sensible letter. I have put your suggestion before Mr. Nankivell. Also, acting on your proposal, I am printing in "The Latest" a list of CAPTAIN serials which have been republished in book-form.

E. E. S.—I am not at all surprised to hear that you have not learned painting, judging by the specimen you enclose. If you are fond of it, you had better start taking lessons at once. If you *will* copy other people's work, do not copy silly postcards.

"Esperanto."—I have received several letters on this subject. I shall refer to them next month, as limited space does not permit of my doing so in this number.

A New Howler.—S. E. K. sends me a howler which I have not heard before: Q.: What is the meaning of equivoque?" A.: "Neigh" (*equi vox*).

W. Weighall.—The epitaph is quaint, but I am not particularly keen on putting epitaphs in THE CAPTAIN. We've got one in already this month.

A PEEP AT ARRAN MOUNTAINS.

Another Tree Study by M. Barnes.

J. Paton Ker.—I much appreciate your letter. You will have seen that we have corrected that Rugby error.

A. V. Tinkler.—I do not know of any CAPTAIN Club in Liverpool. The "Athletic Corner" will be reinstated in May.

David Roth.—I am glad to hear that Crusoe's island was not destroyed, as suggested by our Clubite.

Alexander Scott, Jnr., wants to know whether I can say, "The Leith police dismisseth us." Won't try, thanks. Tongue too hard-worked already.

M. D. R. L.—Every contributor to the "Club" pages receives a book.

Letters, &c., have also to be acknowledged from: C. J. Brooks, "St. Mungo," L. H. Burket, W. J. W., C. Mullins.

THE OLD FAG.

The attention of all readers is called to advertisement page xii., where they will find full particulars of a novel and liberal scheme of Accident Insurance specially devised for their benefit.

Results of January Competitions.

No. I.—"Famous Painters."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF H. GRADIDGE AND SON'S "INTERNATIONAL MATCH" FOOTBALL: A. C. Branch, 86 North Side, Clapham Common, S.W.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: J. C. Matthew 10 Mamhead View, Exmouth.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Eleanor Silsby, H. B. Porteous, A. B. Stewart, C. Wakeford, M. M. Coombes, D. E. Tyler, J. de R. Phillip, W. E. Gibbs, W. H. Gillman, F. A. Rogers, W. S. Leeming, W. Ringham.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF H. GRADIDGE AND SON'S "INTERNATIONAL MATCH" FOOTBALL: Richard F. Le Feaux, 98 Sebert Road, Forest Gate, E.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: Cyril Cole, 29 Barkston Gardens, South Kensington, S.W.

HONOURABLE MENTION: H. G. Harris, F. Tingle, J. A. Brain, W. D. Galloway, W. A. Burn, J. H. Mumford, R. M. Parry, W. Barrett, J. Silcox, F. N. Ballard, E. R. A. Russell, F. W. R. Greenhill.

CLASS III. (Age limit: Twelve.)

WINNER OF H. GRADIDGE AND SON'S "INTERNATIONAL MATCH" FOOTBALL: Alec Thomson, Lynwood, Carnoustie, N.B.

A CONSOLATION PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED TO: H. R. Williamson, 10 Dingwall Road, Croydon.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Doris Attride, H. Mellalieu, R. C. Wynter, Frank Walkey, H. S. Roberts, A. H. Blair, B. Storey, G. H. Roberts, A. H. Wann, R. Lowe, F. Mills, P. Douglas, H. Richardson.

No. II.—"Tales of Mean People."

No age limit.

WINNER OF PRIZE: E. Gawan Taylor, 4 Harewood Hill, Darington.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: Florence Hoare, 10 Hillmarton Road, N.; James Bland, 6 Windsor Street, Glasgow; Mary Ball, 23 Grange Avenue, Chapeltown Road, Leeds.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Gerald Brown-Westhead, Raymond Ashmore, T. W. Spikin, A. A. Kerridge, Elsie N. W. Leigh, F. H. Halliday, Blanche Clarkson, Graham Moorcroft, L. Spero.

No. III.—"Certificate of Merit Drawing Competition."

WINNER OF MESSRS. W. C. HUGHES' MAGIC LANTERN: George W. Kemp, 42 George Street West, Birmingham.

CONSOLATION PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO: B. Frederick Oldham, 79 Lancashire Street, Belgrave, Leicester; William Ringham, 173 Wells Road, Bristol; W. H. Campbell, 182 Lower Clapton Road, N.E.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Stanley W. Leleaux, L. MacDonald Gill, Richard Baxter, Jnr., Gregor McGregor, Jnr., J. S. Protheroe, James Clayton, William Borthwick, J. C. Matthew, D. Stannus Gray, Fred. Baron, Christopher Artindale, O. Lewis.

No. IV.—"Captain Readers."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Twenty-one.)

WINNER OF GEORGE ROWNEY AND CO.'S BOX OF WATER-COLOURS: Basil Labrow, 10 Hillmarton Road, Camden Road, N.

HONOURABLE MENTION: T. W. Spikin, Blanche Clarkson.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Sixteen.)

WINNER OF GEORGE ROWNEY AND CO.'S BOX OF WATER-COLOURS R. Hyde, 4 Thornhill Grove, Barnsbury, N.

HONOURABLE MENTION: F. H. Halliday, Muriel Applegate Reginald T. Brice, Sybil Vincent.

No. V.—*See* "Comments."

No. VI.—"Stamp Collectors' Competition."

CLASS I. (Age limit: Eighteen.)

WINNER OF BRIGHT AND SON'S STAMP ALBUM: William Alexander 97 Joppa Road, Joppa, N.B.

HONOURABLE MENTION: T. Stokes, T. Anning, J. A. Birkenhead, L. C. Durran, G. C. Harryman J. M. Jamison, G. D. Shilson, R Howes, L. F. Milner, A. J. Duncan, P. H. Hanbury, N. Hamnett.

CLASS II. (Age limit: Twelve.)

WINNER OF BRIGHT AND SON'S STAMP ALBUM: Alex. V. Anderson, 66 Arduthie Road, Stonehaven, Kincardineshire, N.B.

HONOURABLE MENTION: G. Nicholson, G. W. Daman, R. Butler, M. Child, J. H. Rose, H. Alexander, C. W. James, B. Pasco, W. S. Robinson, E. Suxon, H. Storey, H. Davey.

Foreign and Colonial Readers.—November.

No. I.—WINNER OF 5s.: K. C. Burness, 34 McKenzie Crescent, Toronto, Canada.

HONOURABLE MENTION: George S. Chuter (India), G. Callender (South Africa), Charles Golding (South Africa), B. G. Trycross (Cape Colony), Walter S. Nailer (India), K. Bailey (Cape Colony), J. Hawken (Cape Colony), F. W. Molesworth (Canada).

No. II.—WINNER OF 5s.: G. P. Cassé, 6 Victoria Road, Sea Point, Cape Town, South Africa.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Leslie H. Burket, H. J. Chuter (India), Dudley Davis (Cape Colony), S. B. Arte (India), K. Bailey (Cape Colony), Audrey Wells, M. V. Hearn (Jamaica), Walter Nailer, Charles Oehley (Natal), J. Hawken.

No. III.—WINNER OF 5s.: E. F. Leplastrier, Linton, Moriarty Road, Chatswood, New South Wales, Australia.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Dorothea Mackellar (Australia), C. Mayes (India), Merlin T. Flint (Cape Colony), J. Hawken, Alec. J. Branch (Canada).

No. V.—WINNER OF 5s.: Leslie H. Burket, Blue Bonnets, near Montreal, P.Q., Canada.

HONOURABLE MENTION: Dorothea Mackellar, J. Hawken, Frederick J. Ewins (Natal), Edgar A. Fearnhead (South Africa), Joseph Gomes (Trinidad), Frederick Ives (U.S.A.), George G. Proctor (Trinidad), Margery C. Huxson (Barbadoes), D. A. Turpin (India).

No. VI.—WINNER OF 5s.: Norman Vivian Tonkin, P. O. Box 136, Germiston, Transvaal, South Africa.

HONOURABLE MENTION: G. P. Cassé, E. Seon (Barbadoes), C. Mayes, Hugh F. Mackie (U.S.A.), George G. Proctor, Cassidy Gibb (Cape Colony).

Winners of Consolation Prizes are requested to inform the Editor which they would prefer—a volume of one of our magazines, or one of the following books: "Cox's Cough-Drops." "The Duffer." "The Rising of the Red Man," "The Gold Bat," "J. O. Jones."

Comments on the January Competitions.

No. I.—There were a large number of entries for this, out of which a good many had the correct list and were chosen finally according to neatness; much was to be desired, however, in Class III. in this respect. Not nearly so large a proportion of competitors sent correct lists this time. No. II. seems to have been the most difficult to solve, for which alternative suggestions were Hassall, Caryll, Linnell, Elmore, and Havell.

No. II.—A popular competition. See "Editorial."

No. III.—As was the case last month, the drawings submitted were, speaking generally, either very good or else very poor. The prize-winning designs and those honourably mentioned were far and away ahead of the remainder. The Art Editor would again urge competitors to make a *special study* of the subject set, and, where possible, draw from life.

No. IV.—For some reason or other, this was not a popular competition, but competitors should remember that in the less attractive or more difficult competitions the field is smaller, and consequently the chance of a prize is considerably greater.

No. V.—So carefully does "Cox's Cough-Drops" appear to have been written that not a single CAPTAIN reader was able to detect an error in it. Curiously enough, the only real mistake in this story was pointed out to us, firstly, by a newspaper reviewer, and, secondly, by a chance caller at the office. The mistake was that in bringing his master back to town the author made the chauffeur reach Mr. Cox's residence by way of Shepherd's Bush, Notting Hill Gate, Kensington High Street, and Bayswater Road, an itinerary which would necessitate a flying leap over the house-tops from Notting Hill Gate to Kensington High Street, and another back to Bayswater Road.

No. VI.—Another popular competition, but not such an easy one as it appeared to be. The prize winners are to be congratulated on the extreme neatness of their entries.

THE COMPETITION EDITOR.

THE CAPTAIN

A MAGAZINE FOR BOYS & OLD BOYS

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